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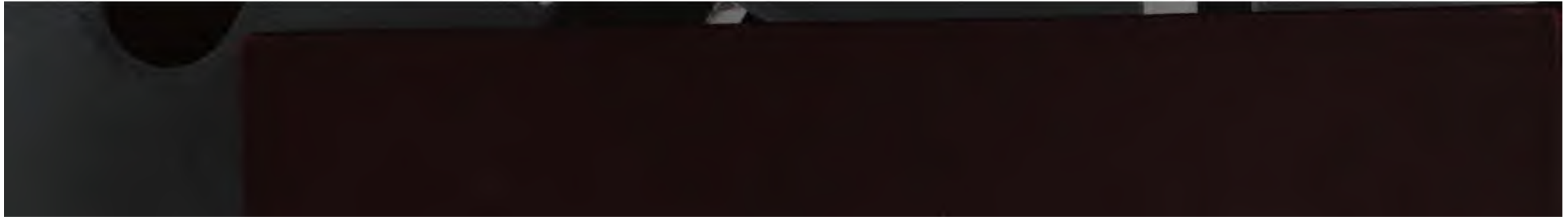

THE

WORKS

OF THE

REV. P. DODDRIDGE, D. D.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

CONTAINING,

I. ORTON'S MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE OF DR. DODDRIDGE.

II. THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF RELIGION IN THE SOUL.

III. CHRISTIANITY FOUNDED ON ARGUMENT.

IV. AN ADDRESS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY RELIGION.

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1802.

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THE

EDITORS' PREFACE.

THAT Dr. Doddridge ranks with the brightest ornaments of the British nation, and of the christian church, as a man of piety, a scholar, and a divine, appears abundantly evident from the ample Memoirs of him contained in this volume, composed by one who resided long in his family, and whose integrity of narration has never been impeached.

Respecting the value of our Author's writings, in general, there is but one opinion; the sun, indeed, is not without spots, but what are these compared with the general excellence and use of that illustrious luminary? His works are popular to a more extensive degree than is common to the most admired authors; while they often charm by critical precision, they convince by powerful argument, please by a lucid method, and warm by ardour of devotion.

The FAMILY EXPOSITOR has passed through eight editions, which is no small proof of public approbation. As an Expositor, uniting the plain import of the text, supported by learned and elegant criticism, and a judicious animated improvement, our author probably has no superior in any language. His sermons and other works, many of which have been often reprinted, are alike directed to inform the judgment, to affect the heart, and to regulate the life. All, who are acquainted with the works of Doddridge, know that they form some of the most masterly defences of christianity, and that they are eminently calculated to expose the unreasonableness of infidelity, and to fortify the mind against the insidious efforts of sceptical philosophers. Hitherto the EXPOSITOR has been published in six volumes, either quarto or octavo, it is now comprised in five.

Although the Doctor's Works have been variously published, no *uniform* edition of them all has yet appeared; but, in the present publication, this desirable object is effected, in which also uniformity is united with *elegance* and *cheapness*. About twenty volumes, in different forms, including Orton's Life of the Author, are given in ten royal octavos; beside numerous

notes by the Editors, affixed to those parts of the work which seem most to require them.

Many must be possessed of the Family Expositor who would like to obtain the other parts, which we call "Detached Works," in order to complete their sets; to meet their wishes, these are now printed in five volumes, on a good demy paper, exactly uniform in size with the octavo editions of the Expositor already published.

We may observe, that, in the life, the reader will find several *notes* from Dr. Kippis's Memoirs of the Author, which contain some interesting facts, omitted by Mr. Orton, or lead to profitable reflections. In the Lectures on Divinity and other Subjects, will be also found many original notes, beside the most valuable hints and references from Dr. Kippis's edition.

Doddridge's Preaching Lectures have been an object of considerable attention among ministers, but were never printed. It is extremely difficult to find a *correct* copy of them; the editors flatter themselves, however, that the copy from which they print them will be found one of the best. To this work, also, are added occasional notes.

As Dr. D's. correspondence was both extensive and often highly interesting, it might be expected, that many of his letters would be found worthy of publication. Accordingly the Rev. Mr. Stedman, has published a volume of Letters to and from Dr. Doddridge, which have been well received; the best of these written by our Author will be included in the "Detached Works."

To the fifth volume of these works will be added, a complete Index, on the most approved plan; and all the appropriate Indexes to the Family Expositor, will be found at the end of the tenth volume; by which arrangement, those who take the Detached Works *only* will have them under every advantage of an entire publication.

The liberal encouragement received from the public in general, and some learned persons of distinguished rank in particular, enables us to present them with a work, which in no small degree secures, at a very moderate price, respectability of execution; and which, while it excites our gratitude to the Great Author of all success, will continue to animate exertion in the progress of our undertaking.

EDWARD WILLIAMS.

EDWARD PARSONS.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE, CHARACTER AND WRITINGS

OF THE LATE

REV. P. DODDRIDGE, D. D.

OF NORTHAMPTON;

BY

THE REV. JOB ORTON.

PREFACE

TO

ORTON'S LIFE OF DR. DODDRIDGE.

THE lives of worthy and pious men are generally reckoned some of the most useful books which have been published.. But there seems a peculiar propriety in laying before the world what can be known of the piety, benevolence and zeal of those, who have filled more eminent stations in it ; and distinguished themselves by their writings in the service of religion. There is a natural curiosity in mankind to know some particulars of the lives of those, whose works they have read with pleasure and advantage. Even minute circumstances, which to others may appear unworthy of public notice, are to them interesting events. Nor is this kind of history merely calculated to entertain and amuse, but is evidently capable of answering much more valuable ends. When there appears an exact correspondence between a man's writings and temper; between the duties he recommended to others and his own practice, his works are read with greater attention, and are more likely, through a divine blessing, to produce the desired effect. The lives of holy, zealous ministers are particularly useful; as in them may be seen a pattern of a christian conversation for all, and of ministerial faithfulness and activity for their brethren; and thus the good influence of such examples may be widely diffused: And when a person of solid worth, learning and piety has been employed in training up young men for usefulness, especially in the ministry, his character must be allowed to demand a particular attention, and may be peculiarly beneficial to the world. It may excite those who have been under his care, to recollect his instructions and example, and their consequent obligations. His conduct in that important office may serve, in some degree, for a model to other tutors; and, if he hath appeared among Protestant Dissenters, may tend to remove some prejudices, if such remain, against their seminaries, as if they were nurseries of schism, enthusiasm and faction. That these several valuable ends may be answered, is the design of this work, and the earnest wish of its author. He is sensible that he wants some qualifications for executing it in such a manner, as to do justice to the character and worth of Dr. Doddridge, and present it in a proper form to the public. He has laboured, but in vain, to engage some better hand to undertake it; and hath at length, with reluctance, submitted to the reasons urged by the Doctor's friends and the admirers of his writings; among which the principal was, their apprehension of its usefulness to the world. Upon the whole, he thought it better to expose himself to censure

for attempting it without due qualifications, than to withhold an excellent pattern from mankind, when the influence of every good example is so needful for their reformation and happiness.

My purpose is to lay before the world, in the following sheets, what appears to me most instructive in his life and character, according to the best judgment I could form from a long and intimate acquaintance, and the best information I could procure. A striking likeness of a person may be drawn by a hand not skilful in colouring; and unable to give the picture that grace, which would render it more generally admired, especially by the best judges. I shall dwell chiefly on those exemplary effects, which the sincere and lively piety of the Doctor's heart produced, in a beautiful correspondence to those circumstances in life in which he was placed. Herein perhaps modern writers of lives have been defective; either from a mistaken apprehension, that it was of little moment, or, as I would rather hope, through want of materials. Had I satisfied myself with giving an account of his public and literary character, especially if I could have embellished it with the beauties of description and language, it might have been more agreeable to the modern taste, and the politer part of my readers. But I am fully convinced, it is the more private part of a man's character, from which we may expect the greatest benefit. What is it to me, that another had a bright genius, was learned, elegant and polite? But to see a display of his piety, humility, zeal, benevolence, and the principles by which they were supported, this, if it be not my own fault, may be very beneficial to me. I thought I should do the most real service to the world by bringing to light those graces of the christian, which, though they do not make the most shining part of a character in the eyes of men, are his fairest ornaments in the sight of God, and the surest proofs of the sincerity of his outward profession. In order to execute this design, I have made such extracts from his diary and other papers, written solely for his own use, and his letters to his intimate friends in which he laid open his whole heart, as I judged most proper to give my readers a just idea of his inward sentiments, and the grand motives on which he acted through life. And if these appear to be, in every respect, agreeable to his profession and public character, I think it must be acknowledged the strongest proof that can be given of his integrity, and consequently greatly tend to heighten our idea and excite our imitation of him.

I am sensible, it hath been objected, that 'what was principally written for a person's own use, ought not be made public.' And no doubt a prudent caution should be used in making extracts from such papers. But (as Mr. Howe hath observed on a like occasion) what are many of the psalms of David, and other holy men; what the meditations of that renowned philosopher and emperor Marcus Antoninus, but records of the most secret dispositions and motions of the hidden man of the heart, made public for the instruction of their own and succeeding ages? As there is so much resemblance in the frame of our minds, nothing certainly can be of more advantage, than to see the secret workings of the hearts of great and good men upon different occasions; and especially to be informed, what methods they took to conquer their particular temptations, to improve their religious character and to keep alive that sacred ardour of love and zeal, which carried them through so many labours and difficulties. The great advantage, which many humble christians have received from such extracts in other lives, is, I think, a sufficient vindication of the use here made of them. The acceptance

and usefulness of Mr. P. Henry's life in particular, encouraged me to pursue this method. Some few of these extracts may not be thought necessary to illustrate Dr. Doddridge's character; but as they appeared likely to impress the reader's heart with pious sentiments, and so subserve my leading design, I was not willing to suppress them. Some quotations from his writings are intended to shew the consistency between the rules he gave to others and his own conduct; and they may lead some to read his works, who might before know nothing or little of them. Accuracy of style is not to be expected in what a person writes merely for his own use, or to his intimate friends; yet it may be as serviceable to others, as any of his publications. I am sensible these extracts and quotations spoil the uniformity of this work and make some sentences abrupt and imperfect; yet, as they are, in my judgment, the best part of it, I could not satisfy myself to omit them, merely upon those accounts.

When I inform my readers, what were his sentiments upon particular subjects and occasions, where it is not supported by his writings and papers, I can with great truth assure them, that my representation is just, from the opportunities I had of learning them from his lectures, conversation, or correspondence; and I am persuaded, that they, who were intimately acquainted with him, will acknowledge the same.

It may be thought an objection to some part of this work, "that the model here proposed, especially of devotional exercises, is too high for the generality of mankind, amidst the necessary cares of their respective families and stations." And it must be acknowledged, that it is no man's duty to be in his closet, when his business in his shop, fields or family demands his attention: Nor would I bind it upon any one's conscience to follow the particular method here described too strictly. No one's practice can serve as a model for every one. That may be a very good rule for one, which is not so for another: And, therefore, every one must use his own discretion in copying after the examples set before him. He must consider his abilities of body and mind, his circumstances and connections in life, that every part of duty may have proper time allotted to it according to its importance. Nevertheless, there are few persons but might employ more time than they do, in cultivating their understandings and improving their graces, by reading, meditation and devotion, without breaking in upon any of the necessary duties of life, if their hearts were in these exercises, and they were more careful to redeem their time, from unnecessary sleep, visits and recreations.* Dr. Doddridge's extraordinary diligence in the services of his station, and that constant attention which he paid to relative duties, plainly evince, that his devotional exercises had a good effect upon him. He found (as Dr. Boerhaave acknowledged he found) 'that an hour spent every morning in private prayer and meditation gave him spirit and vigour for the business of the day, and kept his temper active, patient and calm.'—Yet I must, on the other hand, caution persons of a serious spirit, especially those of a cool temper and a sickly frame, that they be not uneasy, if they find themselves surpassed by him in the fervour of devotion. Allowance must be made for the great difference of natural tempers; and persons must carefully distinguish between that ardour of pious affection, which is indeed desirable, and that

* See Rise and Progress, &c. chap. xx. § 1.

sincerity of heart, which is essential to true and acceptable devotion. His temper was remarkably affectionate and impressible; and therefore I give this caution for the sake of young and less experienced christians, who make a conscience of secret duty; and I should be sorry if any real christians should suspect their integrity, because they do not experience an equal warmth of holy affections. Nevertheless, let them press on after more lively and animated devotion, as it will afford them the sublimest pleasure.

Some, when they have gone through this life, or perhaps only dipped into it, may pronounce, or think, the Doctor an enthusiast, because there was so much of a devotional spirit in him, and he lays some stress on his particular feelings and impressions. This is the random charge of the day; and brought by some, against every affection of the mind, which hath God for its object, and against every person who hath more piety and zeal than the generality. But here also, allowance must be made for different tempers. His whole conduct was steady and uniform, and formed upon those principles, which in private he endeavoured to cultivate. His piety was not a warm sally of passion, nor the effect of a heated imagination, leading him to do things, not warranted by the dictates of sound sense and the word of God; but a strong, active principle, influencing his whole life, and leading him to such vigorous efforts for the good of mankind. 'If there be, saith the judicious Dr. Duchal, what we may call raptures in the love of God, they do not destroy nor interrupt the serenity of the soul; but establish it rather, and raise it into a temper, which the most cool reflecting thoughts approve, and which yieldeth a pure and solid delight.'*

Some of his friends may think me too particular in the vindication of his character from some aspersions, which were thrown upon it. But as I know that prejudices against it are still propagated, to the hindrance of the credit and usefulness of his writings, I thought it an act of justice to plead his cause and the cause of moderation and charity at the same time. If any come to their first knowledge of the censures cast upon him, from this account, they must be unacquainted with scripture or human nature, if they are surprised, that he met with them.

The form of this work may perhaps be objected to, and particularly throwing the several parts of his private character into distinct sections. It may appear like a designed panegyric, and many things may be thought to have been inserted under each head, to make the article and character as complete as possible. Yet I hope persons of candour will find little reason for this reflection; because what is said upon the several parts of his character, is supported either by facts or extracts from his own papers, which are, I think, in many instances, equivalent to facts. A general harangue would, in my opinion, have appeared more like a panegyric. My design was not to exhibit a fine character, but to shew my readers that Dr. Doddridge's was such; and by what method that character was formed and his excellent spirit maintained. The divisions may be more serviceable in this view, than if the whole had been thrown under one general head. It would probably be a vain attempt in any one, I am sure it would be so in me, to unite the several advantages, attending the different ways in which a life may be drawn up. A writer must fix, not so much on that method, which may be best in itself, as that which is most suited to his own temper, abilities and manner of writing; and this the candid reader will suppose I have done.

* Duchal's Sermons, vol. i. p. 246, and Col. Gardiner's Life, 8v. p. 78—82.

I am apprehensive many particulars in the narrative, will appear, to some readers, minute, trifling and not worthy a place in it. Others, I know, will be of a different judgment. My own is, that by these a man's character and views may be best known; and that they contribute to render the narrative more extensively useful, than if the author had rested in generals. The good effects which I have seen, heard of, and, I bless God, experienced, from such particulars in the lives of other good men, especially Mr. P. Henry, have led me to mention them here. I have inserted nothing, but what I thought was, by itself or its connection, adapted to answer some important end. It is in these little instances, that religious men frequently fail, and need the caution both of precept and example. It is not to be expected, that any work, especially one of this kind, which is well known to have its peculiar difficulties, can be equally adapted to persons of different tastes and views. My principal intention was to consult the advantage of *young ministers and students in divinity*, who may be directed and animated by so fair a model, in which the scholar and christian minister are so happily united: And this view of the work will shew the reason, why I have sometimes entered into a more particular detail, than might otherwise have been needful. But I hope that others too, whatever their station and profession may be, will receive improvement from an attentive perusal of this life. They will here find an example, in many respects worthy of their imitation; and will see what care, self denial and resolution are necessary to form the christian character.

So many years have elapsed since Dr. Doddridge died, and since I gave the world, in my funeral sermon for him, some reason to expect a larger account of him, than is contained there, that it may be expected I should give the reasons of its delay. A deep conviction of my own incapacity for executing it in the most desirable manner, kept me long from the attempt. After I had entered upon it, it was interrupted for months and years by my ill state of health and the necessary duties of my station, which took up all the time I could devote to study. It hath been often quite laid aside, without hope of pursuing it; and, through repeated solicitations from some persons of eminence abroad, who knew the Doctor only by his writings, hath, at some lucid intervals, been resumed. As it hath been executed with great care and honesty, and those of my brethren, who have revised it, have thought it adapted to serve the cause of religion and charity, I now, notwithstanding all its defects, venture it abroad into the world; following it with my earnest prayers, and desiring the concurrent intercessions of my friends, that God would be pleased to prosper this feeble attempt to quicken the ministers of Christ in their Lord's work, and to promote the holiness and happiness of all his disciples, into whose hands it may come. *Amen.*

JOB ORTON.

Shrewsbury, Nov. 6, 1765.

MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

REVEREND DR. PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

CHAP. I.

Dr. Doddridge's Birth, Education, early Diligence and Piety.

I CANNOT trace the family from which Dr. Doddridge sprung very far back;* nor is it material. Wise and good men lay very little stress on any hereditary honours, but those which arise from the piety and usefulness of their ancestors. Of what profession his great grandfather was I cannot learn; but he had a brother, John Doddridge, who was bred to the law, and made a considerable figure in the reign of king James I. by whom he was knighted and made one of the judges of the court of king's bench. He wrote several learned treatises in his profession†. He left an estate of about two

* The family from which Dr. Doddridge descended, appears to have been originally settled in Devonshire.—K.

† He was born at or near Barnstable, in Devonshire, and educated at Exeter College, in Oxford; from whence he removed to the Middle Temple, where he became so eminent in the practice of the common law, that he was first made serjeant at law to Prince Henry, then solicitor-general to king James I; after that, principal serjeant at law to the said king in 1607, and knighted the next year. In 1612 he was constituted one of the justices of the common pleas, and afterwards second judge of the king's bench, where he spent the rest of his days, being 17 years. He was so general a scholar, that it is hard to say, whether he were a better artist, philosopher, divine, common or civil lawyer. He had likewise the character of a person of great integrity and courage, being perfectly proof against interest and fear. He died at Forsters, near Egham, in Surrey, Sept. 13, 1628, about the 73d year of his age; and according to his desire, was interred in the Lady-Chapel of Exeter-Cathedral, where there is a handsome monument erected to his memory, on which his effigies is lively pourtrayed in alabaster, in his scarlet gown and robes, and a court-roll in his hand. In an escutcheon are his arms, *sc. argent*, two pales wavy, *azure*, between nine cross croslets, *gules*; with this epitaph inscribed,

Learning, adieu; for Doderidge is gone
To fix his earthly to a heavenly throne:
Rich urn of learned dust! scarce can be found
More worth inshrined in six foot of ground.

NVnC obIIt DoDerIgVs JVDeX.

Izacke's Antiquities of Exeter, p. 151, 152. Fuller's Worthies, and Athen. Oxon, where a list of his works may be seen.

thousand pounds per annum, whether hereditary or acquired I cannot learn; but it was lost out of the family in the time of the civil wars. The Doctor's father, as eldest surviving branch of the family, was heir at law to it, and often urged by his friends to attempt to regain it; but through an apprehension of the great hazard and expence attending the attempt, he chose to decline it. The Doctor sometimes acknowledged the good providence of God, in so ordering events, that the estate never came into his father's possession; as it would then have descended to him at a time of life, when, through the natural warmth and gaiety of his temper, it might have been his ruin.

The Doctor's grandfather was John Doddridge, who was educated for the ministry at the university of Oxford. He was minister of Shepperton in Middlesex, and was ejected from thence August 24, 1662, by the act of uniformity. Dr. Calamy, in his Account of the Ejected Ministers, gives him this character, that "he was an ingenious man and a scholar, an acceptable preacher, and a very peaceable divine.*" Some of his sermons, which I have seen, shew him to have been a judicious and serious preacher. This his grandson, in a letter to a friend, saith of him, "he had a family of ten children unprovided for; but he quitted his living, which was worth to him about two hundred pounds per annum, rather than he would violate his conscience, in the manner he must have done, by submitting to the subscriptions and declarations required, and the usages imposed, by the act of uniformity, contrived by some wicked politicians to serve their own interest, and most effectually to humble those, who had been most active in that general struggle for public liberty, in which the family of the Stuarts had fallen." His funeral sermon was preached by one Mr. Marriot, September 8, 1689; from thence it appears that he had preached to a congregation at or near Brentford, that he died suddenly, and was much respected and beloved by his people.

The Doctor's father, Daniel Doddridge, was brought up to trade, and was an oil-man in London; he had a very large family, all of which died young, but one daughter†, and the

* Vol. ii. p. 664.

† She married Mr. John Nettleton, a dissenting minister at Ongar, in Essex, and died in the year 1734. She was a lady of distinguished good sense and piety, and bore some heavy afflictions with great patience and tranquility; under which her brother behaved to her with the greatest tenderness, and even while at the academy, and in his first settlement, generously contributed all he could spare out of his small stock for her assistance.

Doctor, who was the twentieth and last child of his father's marriage. His mother was the daughter of the reverend Mr. John Bauman, of Prague, in Bohemia. This worthy confessor, foreseeing the troubles, which so soon followed the expulsion of Frederick, Elector-Palatine, left his native country about the year 1626. He was then but just come to age, and quitted a considerable estate, and all his friends, for liberty of conscience. He withdrew in the habit of a peasant, on foot, carrying with him nothing but a hundred broad pieces of gold, plaited in a leathern girdle*, and a Bible of Luther's translation, which the Doctor had. He spent some time at Saxe-Gotha, and other parts of Germany, and came to England, in what year is uncertain, with ample testimonials from many of the principal divines in Germany. He was made master of the free school at Kingston upon Thames. He died about the year 1668, and left one daughter, afterwards Mrs. Doddridge, then a little child. The Doctor thought it a great honour to be descended from these suffering servants of Christ, who had made such sacrifices to conscience and liberty. The care of providence over them and their families was remarkable: For though none of their descendants were rich and great, yet they were all comfortably and honourably supported.

Dr. Doddridge was born in London, June 26, 1702. At his birth he shewed so little sign of life, that he was thrown aside as dead. But one of the attendants, thinking she perceived some motion or breath, took that necessary care of him, upon which, in those tender circumstances, the feeble flame of life depended, which was so near expiring, as soon as it was kindled. He had from his infancy an infirm constitution, and a thin consumptive habit, which made him, and his friends apprehensive, that his life would be very short: And therefore

* It is observable, that he unhappily left his girdle behind him at the inn in which he lay, the first night after the commencement of his journey; and, not being used to such a cincture, did not miss it, till he came to his inn the next evening. He immediately went back to his former lodgings, with the united painful apprehensions of being met by pursuers, and unable to recover his substance. When he arrived at the inn, he enquired of the chamber-maid, if she had seen a girdle, he had left in his chamber? She told him she saw it, but imagining it of no value, she had thrown it away and could not recollect where. After having told her, that he had a great value for his old belt, that it would be very useful to him in the long journey he had before him, and promised her a reward if she found it, she searched diligently, and at length found it in a hole under the stairs, where the family used to throw their worn-out useless furniture. The good man received his girdle with great joy, and pursued his journey with thankfulness to providence for its recovery, and often spoke of it to his friends, as a wonderful and seasonable mercy.

I find him frequently, especially on the returns of his Birth-day, expressing his wonder and thankfulness that he was so long preserved. He was brought up in the early knowledge of religion by his pious parents, who were, in their character, very worthy their birth and education. I have heard him relate, that his mother taught him the history of the Old and New Testament, before he could read, by the assistance of some Dutch Tiles in the chimney of the Room, where they commonly sat: And her wise and pious reflections upon the stories there represented, were the means of making some good impressions upon his heart, which never wore out: And therefore this method of instruction he frequently recommended to parents.— He was first initiated in the elements of the learned languages under one Mr. Stott, a minister, who taught a private school in London. In the year 1712 he was removed to Kingston-upon-Thames, to the school, which his grandfather Bauman, had taught, and continued there till the year 1715. During this period he was remarkable for piety and diligent application to learning. His father died July 17, 1715, upon which he made this reflection, "God is an immortal Father. My soul rejoiceth in him. He has hitherto helped me and provided for me. May it be my study to approve myself a more affectionate, grateful, dutiful child!" That his mother likewise died when he was young, appears from a passage in his sermon to young people, intitled, The Orphan's Hope, "I am under some peculiar obligations to desire and attempt the relief of orphans, as I know the heart of an orphan; having been deprived of both my parents at an age, in which it might reasonably be supposed a child should be most sensible of such a loss*."

About the time of his Father's death he was removed to a private school at St Albans, under the care of a worthy and learned master, Mr. Nathaniel Wood. Here he was so happy as to commence his first acquaintance with Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Samuel Clark, minister of the dissenting congregation there; to whom, under God, he owed his capacities and opportunities of service in the church. For, while he continued at St. Albans, the person, into whose hands the care of his affairs fell after his father's death, proved so imprudent, as to waste the whole of his own and Mr. Doddridge's substance. Dr. Clark was an entire stranger to him; but, with that condescension and benevolence, for which he was remarkable, he took notice of him, and when he heard of his necessities, diligence and seriousness, stood in the place

* Sermon v.

of a Father to him. Had not providence raised him up such a generous friend, he could not have been carried on in the course of his studies. And I hope the wonderful kindness of God to him in this respect, will be considered by orphans as an encouragement to commit themselves to that ever-gracious being, in whom the fatherless findeth mercy.

During his residence at St. Albans he began to keep a diary of his life, in the year 1716: From thence it appears, that he kept an exact account how he spent his time, took great pains to improve his understanding, and make himself master of the several lectures and books, which he was taught. He likewise set himself to do good to his school-fellows, by assisting them in their studies, introducing religious discourse, strengthening any good dispositions, which he saw in them, and encouraging and assisting at social meetings for prayer, especially on the Lord's-day. When he was walking alone in the fields, he either read, or reflected upon what he had read; and would sometimes, in his walks, call upon poor ignorant persons at their houses, give them a little money out of his own small allowance, converse seriously with them, read to them and lend them books. He often mentions the great satisfaction he felt in his own mind in consequence of these attempts to serve them, especially in their best interest, and some instances, in which he had reason to hope they had not been vain.—As he had then the ministry in view, besides his application to the languages, he read portions of the scriptures every morning and evening, with some commentary upon them; and this was seldom neglected, whatever were his school-business, avocations or amusements. He recorded the substance and design of the sermons he heard, what impression they made upon his heart, what resolutions he formed in consequence of them, and what in the preacher he was most desirous of imitating. It was his signal felicity to have so kind and experienced a friend as Dr. Clark, to direct him in these important concerns.

On February 1, 1718-19, he was admitted to the Lord's-supper with the church under Dr. Clark's care, who had taken much pains to give him right notions of that ordinance, and prepare him for it. His own reflections upon it will shew the seriousness of his Spirit in that early part of life; and I hope, be an encouragement to young christians to make a solemn dedication of themselves to the Lord in that ordinance. "I rose early this morning, read that part of Mr. Henry's book on the Lord's supper, which treats of due approach to it. I endeavoured to excite in myself

those dispositions and affections, which he mentions as proper for that ordinance. As I endeavoured to prepare my heart, *according to the preparation of the sanctuary*, though with many defects, God was pleased to meet me, and give me sweet communion with himself, of which I desire always to retain a grateful sense. I this day, in the strength of Christ, renewed my covenant with God and renounced my covenant with sin. I vowed against every sin, and resolved carefully to perform every duty. *The Lord keep this in the imagination of my heart*, and grant I may not deal treacherously with him! In the evening I read and thought on some of Mr. Henry's directions for a suitable conversation after the Lord's-supper: and then prayed, begging that God would give me grace so to act as he requires, and as I have bound myself. I then looked over the memorandums of this day, comparing the manner in which I spent it, and in which I designed to spend it, and blessed be God, I had reason to do it with some pleasure, though in some instances I found cause for humiliation."

In his sermons on the Education of Children, he, in a note, returns his public thanks to Mr. Mayo, of Kingston in Surrey, and Dr. Clark, of St. Albans, for the many excellent instructions they had given him, both in public and private, when under their ministerial care in the years of childhood; of which he expresseth his resolution to retain a grateful and affectionate remembrance. He often acknowledged his great obligations to the latter of these gentlemen, and, in his sermon on his death, says, "I may properly call him my friend and father, if all the offices of paternal tenderness and care can merit that title. To him, I may truly say, that, under God, I owe even myself, and all my opportunities of public usefulness in the church; to him, who was not only the instructor of my childhood and youth in the principles of religion; but my guardian when a helpless orphan, as well as the generous, tender, faithful friend of all my advancing years." He here refers to the influence Dr. Clark had over him to persuade him to devote himself to the ministry, the encouragement he gave him to pursue his academical studies, and the sufficient supply, with which, by his own, and his friend's contribution, he furnished him to go through with them. Serious minds observe with pleasure and thankfulness the methods of providence in leading persons into public and useful stations, contrary to their own expectations. Those by which Mr. Doddridge was led into the ministry were remarkable.

In the year 1718, he had left the school at St. Albans, and was retired to his sister's house to consider of his future pro-

fession. He had an uncle, Philip Doddridge, after whom he was named, who was bred to the law, was a steward to the earl, afterwards duke, of Bedford, and lived in his family at least from the year 1674 to 1689. By this means his nephew became intimately acquainted with some of that noble family: And while his mind was in this state of suspence, the Duchess of Bedford, being informed of his circumstances, character, and strong inclination to study, made him an offer, that if he chose to be educated for the ministry in the church of England, and would go to either of its universities, she would support the expence of his education; and, if she should live till he had taken orders, would provide for him in the church. He received this proposal with the warmest gratitude, but in the most respectful manner declined it; as he could not then satisfy his conscience to comply with the terms of ministerial conformity. He continued some time in great distress from an apprehension, that he should not be able to prosecute his studies for the ministry. Thus he writes, "I waited upon Dr. Edmund Calamy to beg his advice and assistance, that I might be brought up a minister, which has always been my great desire. He gave me no encouragement in it, but advised me to turn my thoughts to something else. It was with great concern, that I received such advice; but I desire to follow providence and not force it. The Lord give me grace to glorify him in what ever station he sets me: Then, *here am I, let him do with me what seemeth good in his sight.*"

About three weeks after this discouragement, he had thoughts of entering on the study of the law, to which he was encouraged by the celebrated Mr. Horseman. He recommended him to a counsellor, Mr. Eyre, who made him some very good proposals; and he was just on the point of determining to settle with him. But before he returned his final answer, he devoted one morning solemnly to seek to God for direction; and while he was actually engaged in this suitable exercise, the post-man called at the door with a letter from Dr. Clark, in which he told him, that he had heard of his difficulties, and offered to take him under his care, if he chose the ministry on christian principles: And there were no other that in those circumstances could invite him to such a choice. "This, to use his own words, I looked upon almost as an answer from heaven; and, while I live, shall always adore so seasonable an interposition of divine providence. I have sought God's direction in all this matter, and I hope I have had it. My only view in my choice hath been that of more extensive service; and I beg God would make me an instrument of doing much good in

the world." Thus was he led into the ministry, and a foundation laid for his eminent usefulness. He continued some months at St. Albans under the instructions of his generous friend, who furnished him with proper books, directed him in his studies, and laboured to cherish religious dispositions and views in his heart.

In October 1719 he was placed under the tuition of the reverend Mr. John Jennings, who kept an academy at Kibworth in Leicestershire, a gentleman of great learning, piety and usefulness; author of two Discourses on Preaching Christ and particular and experimental Preaching, first published in 1723*, and also a Genealogical Table of the Kings of England, Scotland, and France, for the space of 900 years. He was brother to Dr. David Jennings, lately an eminent minister and tutor in London. Dr. Doddridge always spoke with the highest veneration and respect of his tutor. During the course of his studies at Kibworth, he was noted for his diligent application to his proper business, serious spirit and extraordinary care to improve his time.

As a specimen of his vigorous pursuit of knowledge, I find, from a paper in which he kept an account of what he read, that, besides attending and studying the Academical Lectures, and reading the particular parts of books, to which his tutor referred his pupils for the illustration of his lectures, he had in one half year read sixty books, and about as many more in the same proportion of time afterwards. Some of these were large volumes, *viz.* Patrick's Commentaries, Tillotson's Works, most of the sermons that had been preached at Boyle's Lecture, and all the rest were learned or useful treatises. Nor did he read these books in a hasty careless manner, but with great care and close study. Some of them he abridged; from others he made extracts in his Common-place-Book; and when he found in any of them a remarkable interpretation or illustration of a text of scripture, he inserted it in his interleaved Testament or Bible. Thus he laid up rich stores of knowledge; and it contributed greatly to his improvement, that Dr. Clark favoured him with his correspondence, through his academical course,

* These discourses were translated and published in the German language by order of the reverend Dr. Frank, professor of divinity in the university of Hall in Saxony. They were reprinted in London 1736, and there was added to them Dr. David Jennings's Translation of a Latin Letter from the professor's Father to a Friend, concerning the most Useful Way of Preaching. This is a Book that deserves the serious attention of every minister; and I have been informed, that at its first publication, two bishops of the church of England, with an amiable candour, publicly recommended it to the perusal of their clergy, at their visitations.

A new edition of this work is found in "The Christian Preacher," a work lately published by Dr. WILLIAMS.

and gave him his reflections and advices, grounded on the accounts Mr. Doddridge had sent him of his lectures, studies and particular circumstances. He applied himself in this period to the further study of the classics, especially the greek writers. I find, from his papers, that he read these with much attention, and wrote remarks upon them, for the illustration of the authors themselves or the scriptures; and selected such passages, as might be serviceable to him in his preparations for the pulpit. His remarks upon Homer in particular, would make a considerable volume. "Thus a foundation was laid for that solidity, strength and correctness, both of sentiment and style, which must seldom be expected, where those great originals are unknown or disregarded."*

But he still kept the ministry in view and therefore made divinity his principal study, especially the scriptures and the best practical writers. He furnished himself with Clark's Annotations on the Old Testament, for the sake of many valuable interpretations, a judicious collection of parallel texts, and the conveniency of a large margin, on which to write his own remarks; and with an interleaved testament. In these he inserted illustrations of scripture which occurred to him in reading, conversation or reflection; together with practical remarks, which might be drawn from particular passages, their connection with others, or the general design of the sacred writers; especially those which might not, on a cursory reading, appear so obvious, but on that account might be more striking and useful. He laid it down as an inviolable rule (and herein he was an excellent model for students) to read some practical divinity every day. He laboured assiduously to attain an eminent degree of the gift of prayer. For this purpose he made a large collection of proper expressions of supplication and thanksgiving, on common and special occasions, both from scripture and devotional writers, that he might be qualified to perform this part of public service, in a copious, pertinent, and edifying manner.

While he was thus pursuing his studies for the ministry, he was intent upon his work as a christian, and ambitious to improve in all the graces of the christian character. To this end

* By forming his taste upon the great models of antiquity, to which he added an acquaintance with the polite writers of his own country, he acquired an ease and elegance of style which he would not otherwise have attained. His merit was the greater in this respect, as few of the Dissenters had hitherto cultivated the graces of composition, and perhaps not many of them had excelled even in the perspicuity and correctness of their langeage. It is desirable, that the cause of truth, piety, and virtue, should come recommended with every possible advantage.—K.

he spent much time in secret devotion, examining the state and workings of his own heart, and keeping alive an habitual sense of God, religion and eternity. I find under his hand a solemn form of covenant with God, written in this period, agreeable to the advice of many writers upon religious subjects. There he expresseth his views, purposes, and resolutions with regard to inward religion, and his whole behaviour; and devotes himself, his time and abilities to the service of God with the greatest solemnity and chearfulness. It so nearly resembles the form he recommends to others, in his Rise and Progress of Religion, chap. 17, that it need not be here inserted. At the close, he records his determination to read this covenant-engagement over, once a month, as in the presence of God, to keep him in mind of his vows. It appears from his diary, that he did so, and generally the first Lord's-day of every month, and then made such additions, as in present circumstances seemed best calculated to answer the great end he proposed by it. He drew up some rules for the direction of his conduct, while a student, which he wrote at the beginning of his interleaved testament, that he might be often reminded of them and review them. I shall here insert them, as they may be useful to the rising generation, especially students. "1. Let my first thoughts be devout and thankful. Let me rise early, immediately return God more solemn thanks for the mercies of the night, devote myself to him, and beg his assistance in the intended business of the day. 2. In this and every other act of devotion, let me recollect my thoughts, speak directly to him, and never give way to any thing internal or external, that may divert my attention. 3. Let me set myself to read the scriptures every morning: In the first reading, let me endeavour to impress my heart with a practical sense of divine things, and then use the help of commentators; let these rules with proper alterations be observed every evening. 4. Never let me trifle with a book, with which I have no present concern. In applying myself to any book, let me first recollect what I may learn by it and then beg suitable assistance from God, and let me continually endeavour to make all my studies subservient to practical religion and ministerial usefulness. 5. Never let me lose one minute of time, nor incur unnecessary expences, that I may have the more to spend for God. 6. When I am called abroad let me be desirous of doing good and receiving good. Let me always have in readiness some subject of contemplation, and endeavour to improve my time by good thoughts as I go along. Let me endeavour to render myself agreeable and useful to all about me by a tender

compassionate friendly behaviour, avoiding all trifling, impertinent stories; remembering that imprudence is sin. 7. Let me use great moderation at meals, and see that I am not hypocritical in prayers and thanksgivings at them. 8. Let me never delay any thing, unless I can prove, that another time will be more fit than the present, or that some other more important duty requires my immediate attendance. 9. Let me be often lifting up my heart to God in the intervals of secret worship, repeating those petitions, which are of the greatest importance, and a surrender of myself to his service. 10. Never let me enter into long schemes about future events, but in the general refer myself to God's care. 11. Let me labour after habitual gratitude and love to God and the Redeemer, practise self-denial, and never indulge any thing, that may prove a temptation to youthful lusts. Let me guard against pride and vain glory, remembering that I have all from God's hand and that I have deserved the severest punishment. 12. In all my studies let me remember, that the souls of men are immortal, and that Christ died to redeem them. 13. Let me consecrate my sleep and all my recreations to God, and seek them for his sake. 14. Let me frequently ask myself, what duty or what temptation is now before me? 15. Let me remember, that through the mercy of God in a Redeemer, I hope I am within a few days of heaven. 16. Let me be frequently surveying these rules, and my conduct as compared with them. 17. Let me frequently recollect, which of these rules I have present occasion to practise. 18. If I have grossly erred in any one of these particulars, let me not think it an excuse for erring in others.' Then follow some rules about the hours of rising and study, what part of the day to be dovoted to particular studies, &c.——Such pains did he take to train up himself for usefulness in the church!

I think it proper here to remind the reader, once for all, that, when such specimens as these are inserted of the rules he laid down and the resolutions he formed with respect to his conduct, they are to be considered chiefly, as suggesting hints, that may be useful to others in like circumstances; and not as testimonies to his character, or a proof that he, in every instance, acted up to such a standard. Yet on the other hand, it must be owned, that when a person frequently renews such pious resolutions, and examines himself by the rules he has laid down, it shews at least a deep concern about inward religion, and is a strong presumption that he has taken great pains with his own heart. That this was the case with Dr. Doddridge, I am well satisfied from the

perusal of his private papers, in which he has kept a very particular and exact account of the state of his mind, and from which it is easy to trace the evidences of his religious character. The extracts which I have made from his manuscripts in this work, when compared together, and taken in connection with his public character, will enable the reader to judge of this for himself, and will I believe convince him of the truth of what I have asserted. It may be proper in this connection, to repeat the caution already given in the preface to the young christian, into whose hands this book may fall, that he is not to be discouraged because he finds himself, after his sincere endeavours, fall short of the standard, which such rules hold forth. He should remember that the person, of whom he is reading, often saw reason, as will appear in the course of this work, to lament his neglect of some of his own rules, and his acting in some instances, inconsistently with his own best resolutions. The christian character is not formed at once; but those who are diligent in watching over themselves and using the means of grace, though their good resolutions be sometimes overcome, shall, through divine assistance, *grow stronger and stronger*, and at length inherit the reward of the faithful servant.

CHAP. II.

His Entrance on the Ministry and Settlement in Leicestershire.

IN 1722 his tutor, Mr. Jennings, removed from Kibworth to Hinkley, in the same county, and about a year after, viz. July 8, 1723, died in the prime of his days, to the great loss of the church and world. This his pupil, after a previous examination by a committee of ministers (who gave an ample testimonial to his qualifications for it) entered on the ministerial work, July 22, 1722, being then just twenty years old. In a letter to a friend he thus expresseth himself, 'I was struck with the date of your letter. July 22, was the anniversary of my entrance on the ministry. God has been with me and wonderfully supported me in the midst of almost incessant labours for the space of twenty-seven years. I esteem the ministry the most desirable employment in the world; and find that delight in it, and those advantages from it, which I think hardly any other employment upon earth could give me. It would be one of the greatest satisfactions of my life to see my son deliberately chusing the ministry. But I

must leave this with God; and be thankful for the honour he has done me, though he should not see fit to perpetuate it in my family.' He preached his first sermon at Hinkley, from 1 Corinthians xvi. 22. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha.* I find in his diary that two persons ascribed their conversion to the blessing of God attending that sermon; with which he appears to have been much affected and encouraged. He had continued at Hinkley about a year after this, preaching occasionally there and in the neighbouring places, and going on with his course of lectures and studies, when the congregation at Kibworth invited him to be their minister; at the same time a like application was made to him from Coventry.* But he chose Kibworth, principally on account of his youth, and that he might pursue his studies with greater advantage. He settled there in June 1723. As this congregation was small and he lived in an obscure village, he had much time to apply himself to study, which he did with indefatigable zeal. Ministers in general have been too unwilling, even at their entrance on their work, to live or preach in small country places; but he reflected on it with pleasure all his days, that he had spent so many years in a country retirement. Soon after his settlement at Kibworth, one of his fellow-pupils in a letter, condoled with him on being buried alive there; to which he makes this sensible and spirited reply: "Here I stick close to those delightful studies, which a favourable providence has made the business of my life. One day passeth away after another, and I only know that it passeth pleasantly with me. As for the world about me, I have very little concern with it. I live almost like a tortoise, shut up in its shell, almost always in the same town, the same house, the same chamber: Yet I live like a prince; not indeed in the pomp of greatness, but the pride of liberty; master of my books, master of my time, and I hope I may add, master of myself. I can willingly give up the charms of London, the luxury, the company, the popularity of it, for the secret pleasures of rational employment and self-approbation; retired from applause and reproach; from envy and contempt, and the destructive baits of avarice and ambition. So that instead of lamenting it as my misfortune, you should congratulate me upon it as my happiness, that I am confined in an obscure village; seeing it gives me so many valuable advantages, to the most important purposes of devotion and philosophy; and,

* To be assistant to Mr. Warren.—K.

I hope I may add, usefulness too." Here he studied and composed his expositions and sermons with great care and exactness, transcribed almost every one of them in the neatest manner, and thus contracted a habit of preaching judiciously, when his other business would not allow so much time for composition. His favourite authors in this retirement were Tillotson, Baxter* and Howe.† These he read often and carefully. He hath mentioned it as an advantage to him, that having but few books of his own he borrowed of his congregation what books they had in their houses, which were chiefly the practical works of the earlier divines of the last century. By reading these he was led into a serious, experimental and useful way of preaching.

Fond as he was of his study, he would often leave it, to visit and instruct the people under his care. I find, in his diary, hints of the persons he had visited, what he could discern of their religious character and state, what assistance they needed in their great concern, and what he had learned in conversation with them, which might improve himself as a christian and a minister. He condescended to men of low estate in his sermons, visits and manner of converse; and as his congregation chiefly consisted of persons in the lower rank of life, he was careful to adapt his discourses to their capacities. He thus expresseth himself in one of his devotional Exercises at this time; 'I fear my discourse to-day was too abstruse for my hearers. I resolve to labour after greater plainness and seriousness, and bring down my preaching to the understandings of the weakest.'--Concerning his settlement at Kibworth, and care of the congregation, he thus wrote to his friend and counsellor Dr. Clark; " I bless God that he hath provided

* In a letter written in 1723 to a friend, giving him some account of his studies, he saith, " Baxter is my particular favourite. It is impossible to tell you, how much I am charmed with the devotion, good sense and pathos, which is every where to be found in him, I cannot forbear looking upon him as one of the greatest orators, both with regard to copiousness, acuteness, and energy, that our nation hath produced: And if he hath described, as I believe, the temper of his own heart, he appears to have been so far superior to the generality of those, whom we charitably hope to be good men, that one would imagine God raised him up to disgrace and condemn his brethren; to shew what a christian is, and how few in the world deserve the character. I have lately been reading his Gildas Salvianus, which hath cut me out much work among my people. This will take me off from so close an application to my private studies, as I could otherwise covet, but may answer some valuable ends with regard to others and myself."

† I remember to have heard him speak of Barrow with great energy of commendation. Many of the divines of the latter part of the last century were incomparably excellent for the high spirit of devotion, the fullness of sentiment, and the energy and copiousness of stile; and the neglect of them has been of no advantage to modern times.—K.

so comfortably for me here, where I may be doing some good, and shall be no longer burdensome to my friends. I heartily thank you for the excellent advices you give me, especially relating to humility. I must be extremely unacquainted with my own heart, if I thought that I did not need them. I am fully convinced in my sober judgment, that popularity is, in itself, a very mean as well as uncertain thing; and that it is only valuable, as it gives us an opportunity to act for God with greater advantage. Yet I find by the little of it that I have tasted, that it is of an intoxicating nature. I desire not to be solicitous about it; and can honestly say, that when I think I have been instrumental in making or promoting good impressions upon the hearts of some of my hearers, it gives me a much nobler and more lasting satisfaction, than I ever received from any approbation, with which my plain discourses have sometimes been entertained. I have now taken a particular survey and account of the state of religion in my congregation, and I bless God, I find it in a better condition than I expected. My attempts to introduce prayer and a proper method of instruction into some families have, through the divine blessing, been so successful, that I shall be encouraged further to pursue my scheme. The knowledge I have obtained of the temper and character of the people, and the interest which I have in their affections make me hope, that my settlement among them will be to mutual satisfaction. The marks which I daily discern of an honest undissembled friendship and respect, expressed with the greatest plainness and sincerity, is a thousand times more agreeable to me, than the formal and artificial behaviour, which is to be found in more polite places. And now, Sir, I cannot but reflect, as I very frequently do, that, under God, I owe this pleasure and satisfaction to the goodness of my friends, and particularly to your generosity and kindness. If God had not wonderfully provided for me by your means, instead of this honourable and delightful employment, which I am now entering upon, and which I should from my heart chuse before any other in the world, I should in all probability have been tied down to some dull mechanic business, or at best been engaged in some profession, in which I should not have had any of these advantages for improving my mind, or so comfortable a prospect of usefulness now, and happiness hereafter."

Though he kept up the same plan of devotion, which he had followed, while a student, yet upon his settlement with a congregation, considering the importance and difficulty of his work, he thought it necessary to perform some extraordinary acts of

devotion. Accordingly, having read that most useful treatise, Bennett's Christian Oratory, he came to these resolutions; "1. I will spend some extraordinary time in devotion every Lord's-day morning or evening, as opportunity shall offer, and will then endeavour to preach over to my own soul that doctrine which I preach to others, and consider what improvement I am to make of it. 2. I will take one other evening in the week, in which I will spend half an hour in these exercises on such subjects, as I think most suitable to the present occasion. 3. At the close of every week and month, I will spend some time in the review of it, that I may see how time has been improved, innocence secured, duties discharged, and whether I get or lose in religion. 4. When I have an affair of more than ordinary importance before me, or meet with any remarkable occurrence, merciful or afflictive, I will set apart some time to think of it and seek God upon it. 5. I will devote some time every Friday evening more particularly to seek God, on account of those who recommend themselves to my prayers, and of public concerns, which I will never totally exclude. In all the duties of the oratory I will endeavour to maintain a serious and affectionate temper. I am sensible that I have a heart which will incline me to depart from God. May his spirit strengthen and sanctify it, that I may find God in this retirement; that my heavenly Father may now see me with pleasure, and at length openly reward me, through Jesus Christ! Amen."

It will not be unpleasing nor unprofitable to the serious reader, if I insert some specimens of the manner in which he preached over his sermons to his own soul; heartily wishing that it may excite ministers to do the like. "July 23, 1727, I this day preached concerning Christ, *as the physician of souls* from Jer. viii. 22. and having, among other particulars, addressed to those sincere christians, who through a neglect of the gospel remedy, are in a bad state of spiritual health, it is evident to me, upon a serious review, that I am of that number. I know by experience, that my remaining distempers are painful. God knows they are the great affliction of my life; such an affliction that, methinks, if I were free from it, any worldly circumstances would be more tolerable, and even more delightful, than that full flow of prosperity, by which I am so often ensnared and injured. I know Christ is able to help me, and restore me to more perfect health than I have ever yet attained: and my experience of his power and grace is a shameful aggravation of my negligence. Therefore with humble shame and sorrow for my former indifference and folly, I would now seriously attempt a reformation. To this purpose I would

resolve; 1. That I will carefully examine into my own soul, that I may know its constitution, and its particular weakness and distempers. 2. I would apply to Christ, as my physician, to heal these distempers and restore me to greater vigour in the service of God. 3. I would remember that he heals by the spirit; and would therefore pray for his influences to produce in me greater devotion, humility, diligence, gravity, purity, and steadiness of resolution. 4. I would wait upon him in the use of appointed means for this purpose; especially prayer, the study of the scriptures, and the Lord's supper. *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* Pronounce the word, thou great physician, and *save me for thy mercy sake.* Thou hast given me a degree of bodily health and vigour far superior to what, from the nature of my constitution, I had reason to expect. Yet I here record it before thee, that I desire spiritual health abundantly more. I would rather chuse, if thou seest it a necessary means, to be visited with any grievous illness, that might awaken me to greater zeal for thee, and be the means of purifying my soul, than to live at a distance from thee, and sin against thee, amidst such health, as I have for many years enjoyed.—I would further consider my concern in this subject as a minister. God has provided a remedy. He has appointed me to proclaim, and, in some measure, to apply it. Yet many are not recovered. And why? I can appeal to thee, that I have faithfully warned them. My heart does not upbraid me with having kept back any thing that may be profitable to them. I have endeavoured to speak the most important truths with all possible plainness and seriousness, but I fear: 1. I have not followed them sufficiently with domestic and personal exhortations. 2. I have not been sufficiently careful to pray for the success of my ministerial labours. It has rather been an incidental thing, than matter of solemn request. 3. I have lived so, as to forfeit those influences of thy spirit, by which they might have been rendered more effectual. I resolve therefore for the time to come, to be more close in applying to them in their own houses, to pray for them more frequently; to set a greater value upon thy co-operating spirit, and take care to avoid every thing, which may provoke him to withdraw himself from my ministrations. Such caution may I always maintain; and, O, may *the health of my people be recovered!*

Nov. 12, 1727. I preached this day from those words, *I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.* I endeavoured to fix upon unconverted sinners the charge of not loving God, and described at large the character of the christian in the several

expressions of that affection. My own heart condemned me of being deficient in many of them. I humbled myself deeply before God, and do now, in the divine strength, renew my resolutions as to the following particulars: 1. I will endeavour to think of God more frequently than I have done, and to make the thought of him familiar to my mind in seasons of leisure and solitude. 2. I will labour after communion with him, especially in every act of devotion through this week. For this purpose I would recollect my thoughts before I begin, watch over my heart in the duty, and consider afterwards how I have succeeded. 3. I will pray for conformity to God, and endeavour to imitate him in wisdom, justice, truth, faithfulness and goodness. 4. I will rejoice in God's government of the world, and regard his interposition in all my personal concerns. 5. I will pray for zeal in my master's interest, and will make the advancement of his glory the great end of every action of life. 6. I will cultivate a peculiar affection to christians, as such. 7. I will study the divine will and endeavour to practise every duty. 8. I will be diligently upon my guard against every thing which may forfeit the favour of God and provoke his displeasure. I resolve particularly to make these things my care for the ensuing week and hope I shall find the benefit of it, and perceive, at the close, that my evidences of the sincerity of my love to God are more stable and flourishing than they at present are."—Thus careful was he to maintain the life of religion in his own soul, and among his people. Nor was he less solicitous to improve every other opportunity of doing good. He shewed a pious concern for the welfare of the children and servants in the family where he boarded. From hints in his diary it appears, that there were few Lord's-days but he had some conversation with them in private concerning the state of their souls and their religious interests.

He was remarkably solicitous to redeem his time, and with this view generally rose at five o'clock through the whole year, and to this he used to ascribe a great part of the progress he had made in learning*. He often expresseth his grief and humi-

* "I will here record an observation, which I have found of great use to myself, and to which I may say, that the production of this work and most of my other writings, is owing; viz. that the difference between rising at five and at seven o'clock in the morning, for the space of forty years, supposing a man to go to bed at the same hour at night, is nearly equivalent to the addition of ten years to a man's life; of which (supposing the two hours in question to be so spent) eight hours every day should be employed in study and devotion." Fam. Expos. Rom. xiii. 13. Note (k). The manner of expression here is a little ambiguous; but his meaning is, that they would amount to ten years, made up of days of eight hours each, which is as much as most persons would be able, or chuse, to spend in study and devotion; so that it is the same as if the studying hours of ten years were added to a man's life.

liation before God, that he had made some unnecessary visits, and that in others, he had not used the opportunity of introducing profitable discourse; that there had been many void spaces, which had not been filled with any employment, that might turn to a good account. He was accurate and watchful to trace out the causes of his loss of time, and expresseth the strongest resolutions to avoid them. To prevent future waste of time, he laid down, at the beginning of every year, a plan of books to read and business to pursue; of discourses he intended to compose, and of methods that were to be taken to promote religion in his congregation. At the end of a month, he took a review of the execution of his plan, from his diary; how far he had proceeded; wherein he had failed, and to what the failure was owing. He then set himself to rectify the defect for the next month, and made such alterations in his plan, as present circumstances required. He took a more large and distinct review of the whole twice a year, on his birth-day, and New-year's-day, attended with proper devotional exercises of humiliation or gratitude, according as he had failed or succeeded in it. These days were entirely devoted to self-examination and devotion: And upon those occasions, he reviewed the catalogue he kept of the particular mercies he had received, of the sins and infirmities into which he had fallen, and the various events relating to him, during the foregoing period. Having expressed before God proper dispositions of mind upon the review, he renewed his solemn covenant with God and entered into fresh resolutions of diligence and obedience through the ensuing period.—Before he went to visit his friends, and especially before he undertook a journey, it was his custom to employ some time in seriously considering, what opportunities he might have of doing good, that he might be prepared to embrace and improve them; to what temptations he might be exposed, that he might be armed against them: And upon his return, he examined himself, what his behaviour had been, and whether he had most reason for pain or pleasure on the reflection; and his previous and subsequent reflections were attended with correspondent devotions.

In October 1725 he removed his abode to Market-Harborough, near Kibworth. He continued his relation to the congregation at Kibworth, and preached to them, except when Mr. David Some, minister at Harborough (who had taken this small society under his pastoral care, together with his own) went to administer the Lord's-supper to them; and then Mr. Doddridge

supplied his place. He had been long happy in the acquaintance and friendship of Mr. Some, and was led to Harborough by his desire to be near a person of such uncommon piety, zeal, prudence and sagacity. "In him," to use his own words, "he had found a sincere, wise, faithful and tender friend. From him he had met with all the goodness he could have expected from a father, and had received greater assistance, than from any person; except Dr. Clark in the affair of his education." This truly reverend and excellent man died May 29, 1737. "God was pleased to favour him with a serene and chearful exit, suited to the eminent piety and usefulness of his life. I am well satisfied, that, considering how very generally he was known, he has left a most honourable testimony in the hearts of thousands, that he was one of the brightest ornaments of the gospel and the ministry, which the age hath produced; and that all who had any intimacy with him, must have esteemed his friendship amongst the greatest blessings of life, and the loss of him amongst its greatest calamities*." During this period, in April 1727, two young ministers in the neighbourhood, who had been his fellow-pupils and intimate friends, died. The loss of them was very distressing to him, but helped to quicken his diligence and zeal in his ministerial work. Concerning the death of one of them, the only son of Mr. Some of Harborough, he thus writes to a person of quality, who, in that early part of life, honoured him with her friendship; "It hath pleased God to remove my dear friend, Mr. Some, after he had lain several days in a very serene and comfortable frame of mind, and a few minutes before his death, expressed a very chearful hope of approaching glory. He appointed me to preach at his funeral, from Ps. lxxiii. 26. *My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever*; which he often repeated with great pleasure in the nearest views of the eternal world. To reflect, that God is the portion of our friends who are sleeping in Jesus, and that he will be our everlasting portion and inheritance, is certainly the noblest support under such an affliction; a support, which I doubt not but your ladyship hath often felt the importance of: yet, madam, though this consideration may moderate our sorrows, a stroke of this nature will be sensibly felt, especially by persons of a tender spirit. For my own part, though I have been in daily expectation of his death several months, it strikes me deeper than I can easily express, and gives me for the present, a disrelish to all

* Doddridge's Sermons and Tracts, Vol. i. p. 125. 12mo.

entertainments and employments, which do not immediately relate to that world, whither he is gone. Yet in the midst of my sorrows, it is with great pleasure I reflect on the divine goodness in continuing to me many excellent friends, and among them your Ladyship. I desire your prayers, that God would support me under this affliction and do me good by it; and that, now he hath removed a person of so promising a character, he would pour out more abundant influences of his spirit upon me, and other young ministers, who remain, that we may be fitter to supply the want of his services upon earth, and to meet him with honour and pleasure in heaven."—The day after he had attended Mr. Some's funeral, he received the news of the death of the other friend, Mr. Ragg, and was invited to his funeral. These repeated afflictions pressed heavy upon his affectionate spirit; but it appears, from his letters and papers wrote at this time, that they had a happy tendency to increase his seriousness and fervour.

The account he sent to a fellow-pupil of the last scenes of Mr. Ragg's life is so agreeable and instructive, that I cannot persuade myself to omit it. "You desire an account of the illness and death of good Mr. Ragg; and I will transmit the most remarkable circumstances to you, in the same order, as they present themselves to my mind. He was taken ill about ten months before his death, and immediately obliged to leave his place, as assistant to Mr. Watson of Mount-Sorrel, both in the school and the pulpit, and was never afterwards capable of public work. Though his circumstances were low, providence took care of him, so that he never wanted; but could support the charge of many expensive journies and medicines. Persons in plentiful circumstances and of the most valuable characters, were fond of an opportunity of entertaining him at their houses for a considerable time, and contributed generously to his support. I mention this, as an encouragement to myself and you, to repose ourselves chearfully on the care of providence, if we should be brought into such melancholy circumstances. I saw him frequently, and my esteem and affection for him rose, in proportion to the intimacy of our acquaintance.—He had formed his notions of practical religion upon a deep and attentive study of the divine nature and perfections; and placed religion in the *conformity of our wills to the will of God*, rather than in any height of extatic devotion, which the calmness of his temper did not so frequently admit. He considered submission to afflictive providences, as a most considerable part of it;

and thought it wisdom to confine his regards to present duty, without any solicitous concern about future events, which are in the hands of God. His powerful sense of the divine perfections gave him the most venerable and exalted ideas of that happiness, which God hath prepared for his favourites; and it was plain, through his whole life, that he regarded the interests of time and sense as nothing when compared with this. As these governing maxims of his life had engaged him to a very diligent improvement of his mind, and unwearied endeavours for the happiness of others, while he was capable of active services, so under the decays of nature, he was remarkably influenced by them. He was always feeble and frequently in pain; yet, I never heard one murmuring repining word, in those months of vanity, which he was made to possess, and those wearisome nights, which were appointed for him. Nothing could be more amiable, than that serenity of spirit, which he expressed through the whole course of his illness. He was as diligent in searching out proper assistance, and as exact in following the physician's prescriptions, with regard to medicine, diet and exercise, as if all his hopes had been in this life; and yet to all appearance, as easy in mind under disappointments and increasing illness, as if he felt no disorder and apprehended no danger. I once persuaded him to pray with me in the chamber, where we lay together; and never was I more affected. Methinks in that prayer I saw his very heart. He expressed the most entire resignation to God, and seemed to have no will, no interest of his own Under extreme illness and in the near view of death, he referred health, usefulness and life to the divine disposal with as much chearfulness, as he could in his most prosperous days.—When his body was weakest, his reason seemed as strong as ever. A few weeks before his death, I was talking over with him the plan of a sermon on the Perfection of Knowledge in Heaven; and when I mentioned this obvious reflection, How unreasonable is it, that a desire of knowledge should make any good man unwilling to die, he observed, that our present enquiries do not serve to give us full satisfaction, as to the subjects of them; but rather to make us better acquainted with the difficulties that attend those subjects, that so we may have a more exquisite relish for the discoveries, which shall be made in a future state. Such a sentiment was peculiarly beautiful, as coming from the mouth of a person, who could hardly speak or breathe. When we were talking of the uneasiness, which some worthy men give themselves through a fond attachment to particular schemes, or unscriptural phrases, he

said, bigotry is certainly a very unwholesome thing, and I am afraid these good men will ruin their constitutions by being so angry with their brethren. He said many other good things with a very agreeable air, though he was so very weak; for he wore an habitual smile upon his countenance, which was peculiarly amiable, while he was under such a pressure of affliction.—I never heard any person speak with a deeper sense of the evil of sin, than he did the last time I was in his company. He seemed particularly to enter into the aggravated circumstances, which attended the sins of christians, especially ministers. Innocent and pious as his life had been, he seemed to have as affectionate an apprehension of the need he had of the atonement and intercession of the redeemer, as the most profligate sinner could have had in the like circumstance.—There is a great deal of reason to believe, that the thoughts of death had been familiar to his mind: Frequent illness for almost seven years had deeply impressed them. Yet when it made its nearer approach, he started at it. In the beginning of his last illness, he seemed earnestly to desire it; and to the last declared, that he should deliberately chuse it, rather than the continuance of an useless, afflicted life, and that he had no anxious fears as to the consequence of it. Yet he told me, that he felt nature recoil at the apprehension of it, and that a life of vigour and usefulness seemed to have something more charming in it than he had formerly seen. When he found his sickness so painful, and as much as he could well endure, he seemed to fear the more severe conflict, and dreaded it in one view, while he longed for it in another. This sentiment he expressed, naturally enough, in two lines which he spoke extempore to me, as he lay on his bed,

> "Tir'd out with life's dead weight, I panting lie,
> "A wretch, unfit to live, awkward to die.

He smiled at the oddness of the phrase, but told me, he could find none that was fitter to express some remainder of natural reluctance, in opposition to his rational and determinate choice. This awkwardness to die, as he called it, proceeded from a weakness of spirit, which started at every thing shocking and violent, and rendered him incapable of those lively views of future happiness, which he had sometimes experienced in more vigorous days. Though he had not those transporting joys, which some good men have had in their dying moments, yet his heart was fixed, trusting in God.—About a fortnight before he died, we kept a day of prayer on account of him and Mr. Some. As I went into the pulpit, he said to me, very

affectionately, Don't be importunate for my recovery; only pray that God would give me a more lively sense of his presence, and that I may pass my trial well, whatever it may be. He apprehended his approaching end, and calmly desired to be left alone for some time. He then called in his mother and friends, talked seriously and chearfully to them; after a painful struggle, he revived for a few minutes, expressed his confidence in God, and humble joyful expectation of approaching glory and died very easily.—I wish these hints may be of service towards strengthening your faith, and awakening your desire after that glorious world, whither our excellent brother is gone. Let us endeavour to express our friendship by such offices, as may fit us to meet him and each other there, where nothing shall separate us, or impair the joy of our mutual conversation."

In 1729 he was chosen assistant to Mr. Some at Harborough; the congregation there being desirous to enjoy his labours more frequently than before: and he preached there, and at Kibworth alternately.—It was highly improbable, that such a burning and shining light should be long confined to so narrow a sphere. Some large congregations having heard much, and known something, of his worth, sought his settlement with them. But his regard to Mr. Some, love to his own congregation, and desire to have more time for study, than he could have had in a populous town and large society, led him to decline their application. In 1723, he had an invitation to the pastoral care of a large congregation in London; but he thought himself too young to undertake it; and was also discouraged by the unhappy differences which at that time subsisted between the dissenting ministers there, about subscribing or not subscribing to Articles of Faith in the words of Man's device, as a test of Orthodoxy; the majority of them being non-subscribers. In his answer to the gentleman who transmitted the invitation to him, after mentioning some other objections to the proposal, he adds, "I might also have been required to subscribe, which I am resolved never to do. We have no disputes on that matter in these parts. A neighbouring gentleman once endeavoured to introduce a subscription; but it was effectually over-ruled by the interposition of Mr. Some of Harborough, Mr. Norris of Welford, and Mr. Jennings, my tutor. I shall content myself here with being a benevolent well-wisher to the interests of liberty and peace."

In 1728, he received a pressing invitation from one of the dissenting congregations at Nottingham, and a few months after, from the other. There were many recommending cir-

cumstances in these invitations. The affection many of the people had expressed for him, and the prospect of greater opportunities of usefulness in such a situation, led him to take some time to consider the affair. It appears, from some account he hath left of it, that he proceeded in the deliberation with much caution, and carefully examined his heart, lest any mean, unworthy motives should influence him. He foresaw some inconveniences attending a settlement there, but professeth his readiness to expose himself to them, if he was convinced that duty required it. After he had weighed all circumstances, consulted his wisest friends and sought divine direction, he chose to decline both these applications, though a settlement at Nottingham would have been greatly favourable to his worldly interest. 'I desire, saith he, upon the whole, to make this use of the affair, to be so much the more diligent in study and watchful in devotion; since I see, that if ever providence fixes me with any considerable society, I shall find a great deal to exercise my gifts and graces, and have less time for study and retirement, than I have here."

CHAP. III.

His Entrance on the Work of a Tutor.

WHEN he left the Academy, his tutor Mr. Jennings, a few weeks before his death, much pressed him to keep in view the improvement of his course of academical lectures, and to study in such a manner, as to refer what occurred to him, to the compendiums which his tutor had drawn up, that they might be illustrated and enriched. Mr. Doddridge did not then suspect, what he afterwards learned, that Mr. Jennings had given it as his judgment, that, if it should please God to remove him early in life, he thought Mr. Doddridge the most likely of any of his pupils, to pursue the schemes which he had formed; and which indeed were very far from being complete, as he died about eight years after he had undertaken that profession.

During this his pupil's settlement at Kibworth, he, agreeable to the advice of his tutor, reviewed his course of lectures with care. An ingenious young gentleman, Mr. Thomas Benyon, son of Dr. Samuel Benyon, a celebrated minister and tutor at

Shrewsbury, who died in 1708, had thoughts of attempting to revive the scheme of his deceased father. In conversation one day with Mr. Doddridge, the discourse turned upon the best method of conducting the preparatory studies of young men intended for the ministry. Mr. Benyon earnestly desired he would write down his thoughts upon the subject. This he did, as a letter to his friend, which grew into a considerable volume. But when he had just finished this work, his friend, for whose use it was principally intended, died, and the treatise remained in his own hands. The Reverend Mr. Saunders of Kettering, happening to see it in his study, borrowed it, and shewed it to the Reverend Dr. Watts, with whom Mr. Doddridge had then no personal acquaintance. Dr. Watts was much pleased with the plan, made some remarks upon it, and shewed it to several of his friends, who all joined with him in an application to Mr. Doddridge, to solicit his attempting to carry it into execution. As they were then in a great measure strangers to him, Mr. Some was the person principally employed in managing this affair. He had long been well acquainted with Mr. Doddridge, and knew he had every important and desirable qualification for the instruction of youth. He therefore proposed his undertaking it, and pressed it in the strongest manner. He would by no means allow the validity of his plea of incapacity; but urged, that supposing him less capable than his friends believed, he might improve his time in that retirement, when engaged in such a work with a few pupils, to greater advantage, than without them. Mr. Some had likewise, unknown to him, engaged the friends of some young men, to place them under his care, and thereby prevented another objection, which might have arisen; and Mr. Saunders offered his own brother to be the first pupil of this intended academy. What the state of his mind was, while this affair was in agitation, will appear from this extract; "I do most humbly refer this great concern to God, and am sincerely willing the scheme should be disappointed, if it be not consistent with the greater purposes of his glory, yea will not be remarkably subservient to them. I depend upon him for direction in this affair, and assistance and success, if I undertake it. While I am waiting his determination, I would apply more diligently to my proper business, and act more steadily by the rules I have laid down for my conduct. May he grant, that in all my schemes relating to public service, I may, as much as possible, divest myself of all regard to my own ease and reputation, and set myself seriously to consider, what I can do for the honour of the Redeemer, and the good of the world!"

Before this affair was quite determined, he acknowledgeth it as a kind providence, that the dissenting ministers in that neighbourhood agreed to meet at Lutterworth, April 10, 1729, to spend a day in humiliation and prayer for the revival of religion. Upon that occasion Mr. Some preached that admirable discourse, which was afterwards printed, concerning the proper methods to be taken by ministers for the revival of religion in their respective congregations, from *Rev.* iii. 2. Mr. Doddridge appears to have been greatly impressed with that discourse, as many other ministers have been. It led him to form and record some particular purposes, concerning his conduct as a minister, grounded upon the advices contained in it. To this assembly Mr. Some proposed the scheme he had concerted for the establishment of an academy, at Harborough, under the care of his young friend. The ministers unanimously concurred with him in their sentiments of the propriety and usefulness of the scheme and Mr. Doddridge's qualifications for conducting it; and promised all the assistance and encouragement in their power. This had great weight in forming his determination. He consulted some of his brethren and friends at a distance, particularly Dr. Clark. They likewise urged his undertaking this design, and at length he consented to it. One thing which much encouraged him to enter upon this office, was, the circumstance of his retreat at Harborough; the pastoral care of the congregation there and at Kibworth, Mr. Some diligently fulfilled; so that he had little to do as a minister, but to preach once a week. These were some of his reflections and resolutions upon the undertaking; "Providence is opening upon me a prospect of much greater usefulness than before, though attended with vast labour and difficulty. In divine strength I go forth to the work, and resolve upon the most careful and vigorous discharge of all the duties incumbent upon me, to labour for the instruction and watch for the souls of my pupils. I intend to have some discourse with them on the Lord's day evenings upon subjects of inward religion. I will endeavour to give a serious turn to our conversation at other times, and always bear them on my heart before God with great tenderness and affection. I will labour to keep such an inspection over them, as may be necessary to discover their capacities, tempers and failings, that I may behave in a suitable manner to them. In all I will maintain a humble dependence on divine influences, to lead me in the path of duty and prudence; and enable me to behave in a way answerable to the character in which I appear, and those agreeable

expectations, which many of my friends have entertained of me. Considering the work before me, I would set myself with peculiar diligence to maintain and increase the life of religion in my own soul, and a constant sense of the divine presence and love. For I find, when this is maintained, nothing gives me any considerable disquiet, and I have vigour and resolution of spirit to carry me through my labours. When I am conscious of the want of this, and any inconsistency of behaviour towards the divine being, it throws a damp upon my vigour and resolution; yea upon all the other pleasures of life. In order to maintain this habitual delightful sense of God, I would frequently renew my dedication to him, in that covenant, on which all my hopes depend, and my resolutions for universal, zealous obedience. I will study redeeming love more, and habitually resign myself and all my concerns to the divine disposal. I am going to express and seal these resolutions at the Lord's table: And may this be the happy period, from which shall commence better days of religion and usefulness, than I have ever yet known!"

He now reviewed his plan of academical studies, with Dr. Watts's remarks, and corresponded with him upon the subject. He read every valuable book on the education of youth, which he could meet with, and made such extracts as he thought might be serviceable in carrying on his design. Besides which, I find he wrote many letters to ministers of different denominations, with whom he was acquainted, desiring their advice in this great undertaking; particularly the Reverend Dr. Samuel Wright, of London, who favoured him with his sentiments at large, especially on the subject of divinity lectures.* He thought it his wisdom to make trial first in a more private way, with two or three pupils, declining to receive others, that offered.

Accordingly, at Midsummer, 1729, he opened his academy. His first lecture to his pupils was of the religious kind; shewing the nature, reasonableness and advantages of acknowledging God in their studies. The next contained directions for their behaviour to him, to one another, to the family and all about them; with proper motives to excite their attention to them: Then he proceeded to common lectures.—The wise observers of providence will see the loving kindness of God to the church, in thus leading him into an office, which he discharged in so honourable and useful a manner. What hath been observed

* Mr. Clark communicated to him various transcripts from the lectures of Mr. Jones, who had been a tutor of distinguished ability and learning, at Tewksbury in Gloucestershire.—K.

likewise shews the great caution with which he undertook this charge, and the deep sense he had of its weight and importance; and for these reasons I have been so particular in relating the progress of this affair.

CHAP. IV.

His Settlement at Northampton,

MR. DODDRIDGE had been employed as a tutor but a few months, when providence directed him to a station of greater ministerial usefulness. The dissenting congregation at Castle-hill, in Northampton, being vacant by the removal of their pastor, Mr. Tingey, to London, he preached occasionally to them, with other neighbouring ministers. His services were so acceptable to the people, that they invited and strongly urged him, to accept the pastoral charge of them. Some of his brethren, particularly Mr. Some, advised his continuance at Harborough; as he would, by his connection with Mr. Some, have more time to apply to his work as a tutor, than if he had the sole care of a large congregation; and there was another minister, who, they thought, would supply the vacancy at Northampton, though not equally to the satisfaction of the congregation. I find, in his papers, the arguments for and against his settlement there, stated at large, and his own thoughts upon them; which shew with how much caution he proceeded in this affair. The arguments urged by his friends above-mentioned and their opinion, had so much weight with him, that he resolved to continue at Harborough. But the supreme disposer determined otherwise. Mr. Some, in pursuance of his view of the case, went to Northampton to persuade the people to wave their application. But instead of this, when he saw their affection and zeal in the affair, and heard the motives on which they acted, and the circumstances in which they were, he was, as he expressed it, like *Saul among the prophets*, and immediately wrote to Mr. Doddridge to press his acceptance of the invitation. Dr. Clark strongly urged him to it. He was nevertheless, on many accounts, averse to it; but was willing to shew so much respect to that congregation, as to give them his reasons for declining it in person.—As this was his last settlement in life, his own account of the manner in which he was conducted to it, will, I hope, be agreeable and instructive; parti-

cularly to his friends. 'While I was pleasing myself with the view of a continuance at Harborough, I little thought how few days would lead me to a determination to remove from it. But providence had its own secret designs, at that time invisible to me. I went to Northampton the last Lord's day in November, 1729, to take leave of my good friends there, as gently as I could; and preached a sermon, to dispose them to submit to the will of God, in events which might be most contrary to their views and inclinations, from Acts xxi. 14. *And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, the will of the Lord be done.* On the morning of that day an incident happened, which affected me greatly. Having been much urged on Saturday evening, and much impressed with the tender intreaties of my friends, I had, in my secret devotion, been spreading the affair before God, though as a thing almost determined in the negative; appealing to him, that my chief reason for declining the call, was the apprehension of engaging in more business, than I was capable of performing, considering my age, the largeness of the congregation, and that I had no prospect of an assistant. As soon as ever this address was ended, I passed through a room of the house in which I lodged, where a child was reading to his mother, and the only words I heard distinctly were these, *and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.* Though these words were strongly impressed upon my mind, and remained there with great force and sweetness, yet I persisted in my refusal. But that very evening, happening to be in company with one of the deacons of that congregation, he engaged me to promise to preach his father's funeral sermon, from a particular text, on timely notice of his death; which it was imagined would be in a few weeks. It pleased God to remove him that night, which kept me there till Wednesday. Going in the interval to some houses, where I had been a stranger, and receiving visits from persons of the congregation, whom I had not so much as heard of, I was convinced, beyond all doubt, of the earnest desire of my friends there to have me settled among them. I saw those appearances of a serious spirit, which were very affecting to me. Several attended the funeral, who were not stated hearers there, and expressed much satisfaction in my labours. Before I went away, the young persons came to me in a body, earnestly entreated my coming among them and promised to submit to all such methods of instruction, as I should think proper." This last circumstance he acknowledgeth, in his dedication of his Sermons to young people, was the consideration, which turned the scales for his going to Northampton, after they had long

hovered in uncertainty. "Upon the whole, I was persuaded it was my duty to accept the invitation. It was indeed with great reluctance; as I had gone contrary to the advice of some friends, for whom I had a high regard, and it was breaking my very agreeable connections at Harborough. I thought there was a prospect of doing good at Northampton, equal to what I could ever hope to have as a minister; and was much afraid, if I declined the invitation, the congregation would be greatly injured. There were some steps in the leadings of providence, which seemed to me exceedingly remarkable; and though some of my friends have much blamed and discouraged me, I could not refuse, without offering the most apparent injury to my own conscience." Some of his friends here referred to, quickly saw reason to approve his conduct, and adore the wisdom of providence in disposing him to settle there.

December 24, 1729. He removed to Northampton; and about three weeks after entered upon house-keeping. Being desirous to begin his new relation, as a head of a family, with God, he engaged several of his friends to spend an evening in prayer with him, for the presence and blessing of God in his new habitation. On that occasion he expounded Psalm ci, and testified before God and them what were his purposes and resolutions as to family-government.——Upon examining into the state of his own mind, he soon found that religion had been declining in it, through his anxiety about this new settlement, his concern to leave his Harborough friends, and the hurries attending his removal and furnishing his house. As soon, therefore, as he was fixed in it, he set himself to revive religion in his heart; and, among other methods, he determined to set apart one whole day for fasting, humiliation and prayer, to animate his own soul, and engage the divine blessing on his family, studies and labours. It may not be unprofitable to insert the scheme he pursued on such days, in his own words. "The Saturday, immediately preceding the Lord's day, on which the Lord's supper is to be administered, I propose to spend as a day of extraordinary devotion. I will endeavour to have dispatched all my business, and whatever is necessary to my preparation for such a day, on Friday-night; particularly I will look over my diary and other memorandums, which may be of use to me in the fast itself. I will rise early; endeavour, while rising, to fix upon my mind a sense of God and my own unworthiness, and will then solemnly address myself to God for his assistance in all the particular services of the day, of which I will form a more particular plan than this. I will then read, and afterwards

expound in the family, some portion of scripture, peculiarly suitable to such an occasion, and will make a collection of such lessons. After family worship I will retire and pray over the portion of scripture I have been explaining. I will then set myself, as seriously as I can, to revive the memory of my past conduct; especially since the last season of this kind. I will put such questions as these to myself,——What care have I taken in the exercises of devotion? What regard have I maintained to God in the intervals of it? What diligence have I used in regarding providence and redeeming time? What command have I exercised over my appetites and passions? What concern have I had to discharge relative duties? How have I relished the peculiar doctrines of the gospel? And upon the whole, how am I advancing in my journey to a better world?—I will then record my sins with their peculiar aggravations, that I may humble myself before God for them; and my mercies, with the circumstances that set them off, that I may return fervent thanks for them. Having made a catalogue of hints upon both these subjects, I will spend some time in meditation upon them; and having read some Psalms or Hymns, which speak the language of godly sorrow, I will go into the presence of God, particularly confessing my sins and the demerit of them, solemnly renouncing them, and renewing my covenant against them. I will then consider, what methods are proper to be taken, that I may avoid them for the future. A devotional lecture to my pupils will be an important part of the work of this day. I will after that spend some time in prayer for them, my family and people. The remainder of my work shall be praise, with which I think I ought to conclude even days of humiliation; though sometimes a larger or smaller space of time shall be allotted to this work, as peculiar circumstances require. After a little refreshment, I will converse with some of my pupils privately about inward religion; which I may do with some peculiar advantage, after having been lecturing to them on such a subject, and so particularly praying for them. I would spend the evening in grave conversation with some pious friends, with whom I can use great freedom as to the state of their souls: And at night review the whole, and conclude the day with some religious exercises, suited to the work in which I have been engaged, and the frame of my own soul; and will keep an account of what passeth at these seasons. My God, assist me in this important duty. Make it so comfortable and useful to me, that I may have reason to praise thee, that my thoughts were directed, and my resolutions determined to it." With

these pious exercises, and in this solemn manner, did he enter on his ministry at Northampton.

That he might be better qualified for, and quickened to that large pastoral work now devolved upon him, he employed some of the time between his settlement and ordination, in reading the best treatises of the qualifications and duties of ministers; particularly Chrysostom on the Priesthood, Bowles' Pastor Evangelicus, Burnet on the Pastoral Care, and Baxter's Gildas Salvianus. He likewise read the Lives of some pious active Ministers; particularly of Mr. P. Henry, which he often spoke of as affording him much instruction and encouragement. He selected the most important advices, reflections and motives contained in these books, which he frequently reviewed. He likewise at this time made a collection of those maxims of prudence and discretion, which he thought demanded a minister's attention, if he desired to secure esteem and usefulness.

About two months after his settlement at Northampton it pleased God to visit him with a dangerous illness, which gave his friends many painful fears, that the residue of his years of usefulness to them and to the world would be cut off. But, after a few weeks of languishing, God mercifully restored his health. While he was recovering, but yet in a very weak state, the time came, which had been fixed for his ordination. Of the transactions of that day, he has preserved the following account. "March 19, 1729-30. The afflicting hand of God upon me hindered me from making that preparation for the solemnity of this day, which I could otherwise have desired, and which might have answered some valuable end. However, I hope it hath long been my sincere desire to dedicate myself to God in the work of the ministry; and that the views, with which I determined to undertake the office, and which I this day solemnly professed, have long since been fixed. The work of the day was carried on in a very honourable and agreeable manner. Mr. Goodrich of Oundle began with prayer and reading the scriptures. Mr. Dawson of Hinkley continued the exercise. Then Mr. Watson of Leicester preached a suitable sermon from 1 Tim. iii. 1. *This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.* Mr. Norris of Welford then read the call of the church, of which I declared my acceptance: he took my confession of faith, and ordination-vows and proceeded to set me apart by prayer. Mr. Clark of St. Albans gave the charge to me, and Mr. Saunders of Kettering the exhortation to the people. Then Mr. Mattock of

Daventry concluded the whole solemnity with prayer.* I cannot but admire the goodness of God to me in thus accepting me in the office of a minister, who do not deserve to be owned by him as one of the meanest of his servants. But I firmly determine, in the strength of divine grace, that I will be faithful to God, and the souls committed to my charge; and that I will perform what I have so solemnly sworn. The great indisposition under which I labour, gives me some apprehension, that this settlement may be very short: but, through mercy, I am not anxious about it. I have some chearful hope, that the God, to whom I have this day been, more solemnly than ever, devoting my service, will graciously use me either in this world or a better; and I am not solicitous about particular circumstances, where or how. If I know any thing of my heart, I apprehend I may adopt the words of the apostle, that it is *my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death*; that, *to me to live is Christ, and to die* unspeakable *gain.* May this day never be forgotten by me, nor the dear people committed to my charge, whom I would humbly recommend to the care of the great shepherd!"

The annual return of his ordination-day was observed by him with some peculiar solemnity in his secret devotions. Thus he writes upon it; "It is this day, fifteen years, since I have borne the pastoral office in the church of Christ. How many mercies have I received in this character! But alas! how many negligences and sins have I to be humbled for before God! Yet I can call him to record upon my soul, that the office is my delight, and I would not resign the pleasures of it for any price, which the greatest prince upon earth could offer me."

CHAP. V.

His Discharge of his Ministry at Northampton.

MR. Doddridge having entered on the pastoral office with so much seriousness and solemnity, we are now to see with how much faithfulness and zeal he performed his vows, and *fulfilled*

* It is rather surprising that we do not meet with the name of Mr. Some on this occasion. Some particular incident, now not known, perhaps a sudden illness, might have deprived Mr. Doddridge, of the assistance of so valuable and intimate a friend. That the cause should not have been mentioned by Mr. Orton in his memoirs, or by Mr. Doddridge in his diary, is an omission that could scarcely have been expected.—K.

the ministry he had received of the Lord Jesus.—It was his first care, as a pastor, to know the state of his flock. As it was large, and lay dispersed in most of the neighbouring villages, he had frequent meetings with the deacons and a few other persons belonging to it, of whom he made particular enquiries concerning the members and stated hearers, their names, families, places of abode, connections and characters. He entered in a book the result of these enquiries, and what other intelligence of this kind he could honourably procure. This book he often consulted, that he might know how, in the most prudent and effectual manner, to address them in public and private; and made such alterations from time to time in this list, as births, deaths, additions, and his increasing acquaintance with his people required. By this list he was directed in the course of his pastoral visits, and could form some judgment what degree of success attended his labours. Here he inserted the names and characters of the lowest servants in the families under his care, that he might remember, what instructions, admonitions and encouragements they needed; what hints of exhortation he had given to them or others, how they were received, what promises they had made him, and who wanted bibles, or other religious books, that he might supply them. By this list he was directed how to pray for them. He likewise wrote down particular hints of this kind, as they occurred, which were to be taken notice of in the historical register of his congregation; especially when the many revolutions of one kind or another made it necessary for him to renew it.

It hath been already observed what care and pains he took in composing his sermons, when he first entered on the ministry. His work as a tutor and the pastoral care of a large congregation, rendered it next to impossible that he should be so exact and accurate afterwards: Nor was it needful; having habituated himself for several years to correct compositions, having laid up such a fund of knowledge, especially of the scriptures, which was daily increasing by his studies and lectures, he sometimes only wrote down the heads and leading thoughts of his sermons, and the principal texts of scripture he designed to introduce. But he was so thoroughly master of his subject, and had such a ready utterance and so warm a heart, that perhaps few ministers can compose better discourses than he delivered from these short hints*. When his other important business would permit,

* This encomium is to be admitted with some slight degree of abatement. The Sermons of Dr. Doddridge were different as he was differently circumstanced.

when he was called to preach upon particular occasions, or found his spirits depressed by bodily infirmities, or other afflictive providences, he thought it his duty to write his sermons more largely. Of what kind they were, the world has had a sufficient specimen in those, which have been published. And it is imagined all persons of judgment and candour will allow, that they are well calculated to answer the great end of preaching. The vital truths of the gospel, and its duties, as enforced by them, were his favourite topics. He considered himself as a *Minister of the gospel*, and therefore could not satisfy himself without preaching *Christ and him crucified*. He never puzzled his hearers with dry criticisms and abstruse disquisitions; nor contented himself with moral essays and philosophical harangues, with which the bulk of his auditory would have been unaffected and unedified. He thought it cruelty to God's children to give them *stones*, when they came for *bread*. "It is my desire, saith he, not to entertain an auditory with pretty lively things, which is comparatively easy, but to come close to their consciences, to awaken them to a real sense of their spiritual concerns, to bring them to God, and keep them continually near to him; which, to me at least, is an exceeding hard thing." He seldom meddled with *controversial points* in the pulpit; never with those, with which he might reasonably suppose his congregation was unacquainted; nor set himself to confute errors, with which they were in no danger of being infected. When his subject naturally led him to mention some writers, from whom he differed, he spoke of them and their works with candour and tenderness; appealing constantly to the scriptures, as the standard, by which all doctrines are to be tried. He shewed his hearers of how little importance most of the differences between protestants are, and chose rather to be a *healer of breaches*, than to widen them. He always spoke with abhorrence of passionately inveighing against our brethren in the pul-

When he had leisure to draw out his plan and the hints of what he proposed to say to a considerable extent, his discourses were often excellent in a high degree. But at other times, when he could but just lay down his scheme, with only a very few thoughts under it, his sermons, especially if he was not in a full flow of spirits, were less valuable. Once, during my residence with him, a number of pupils complained through the medium of Mr. Orton, that, though their revered tutor's academical lectures were admirable, they had not in him a sufficiently correct model of pulpit composition. The consequence of the intimation was, that his sermons became far superior to what they had sometimes formerly been; for he was the most candid of all men to the voice of gentle admonition. When, however, he took the least pains, he was always perspicuous in his method, and natural and orderly in the arrangement of his sentiments; and hence he furnished an example, from which many of the young men educated under him derived no small benefit in their future labours.—K.

pit, and making christian ordinances the vehicle of malignant passions. He thought this equally affronting to God and pernicious to men; poisoning instead of feeding the sheep of Christ. He seldom preached topical sermons, to which any text of scripture relating to the subject might be affixed; but chose to draw his materials and divisions from the text itself; and this gave him an opportunity of introducing some uncommon, striking thoughts, arising from the text, its connection, or the design of the sacred writer. When his subject was more comprehensive, than could be well discussed on one Lord's-day, he generally chose a new text, in order to supply him with fresh materials, keep up the attention of his hearers, and increase their acquaintance with their bibles. He chose sometimes to illustrate the scripture-histories, and the character of persons there recorded. He selected the most instructive passages in the prophets, relating to the case of the Israelites, or some particular good man among them, and accommodated them to the circumstances of christians, where he thought there was a just and natural resemblance. In these discourses he had an opportunity of explaining the designs of the prophecies, displaying divine wisdom, faithfulness and grace, and suggesting many important instructions. This method produced a variety in his discourses, and was pleasing and edifying to his hearers. He thought himself fully justified in these accommodations by the practice of the inspired writers of the New Testament.

He was always warm and affectionate in the application of his sermons, and experimentally described the workings of the heart, in the various circumstances, which he had occasion to treat of: Thus he came home to his hearers' bosoms, and led them to see their real characters, wherein they were defective, and how far they might justly be comforted and encouraged. He gives this reason for that warmth of devout affection, with which he addressed his hearers; "While I have any reverence for scripture or any knowledge of human nature, I shall never affect to speak of the glories of Christ, and of the eternal interests of men, as coldly, as if I were reading a lecture of mathematics, or relating an experiment in natural philosophy. It is indeed unworthy the character of a man and a christian to endeavour to transport men's passions, while the understanding is left uninformed and the judgment unconvinced. But so far as is consistent with a proper regard to this leading power of our nature I would speak and write of divine truths with a holy fervency. Nor can I imagine that it would bode well to the

interest of religion to endeavour to lay all those passions asleep, which surely God implanted in our hearts to serve the religious as well as the civil life, and which, after all, will probably be employed to some very excellent or very pernicious purposes*."

He thought it a part of ministerial prudence to take public notice of remarkable providential occurrences, affecting the nation, the town, or any considerable number of his hearers; any uncommon appearances in nature, or other events, that were the subject of general conversation; the seasons of the year and especially the mercies of harvest; and he endeavoured in his discourses to graft lessons of wisdom and piety upon them.—He chose to preach funeral sermons for most of those who died in communion with his church, even the poorest; and for others, where there was any thing remarkable in their character or removal. He imagined the minds of their relations and friends were at such times more disposed, than usual, to receive advice, and would need and drink in the consolations of the gospel. These discourses were also generally attended by the acquaintance and neighbours of the deceased persons, who were not his stated hearers; and he endeavoured to improve such occasions for conveying some useful impressions to their minds.—He never had a stated assistant, but constantly preached twice every Lord's-day, when his health permitted; except some of his senior pupils, who had entered on the ministry, were disengaged, and then they performed the services of one part of the day. But even then, so solicitous was he not to *do the work of the Lord negligently*, that he often preached in the evening. A set of sermons against popery, the last of which, *viz.* on "the absurdity and iniquity of persecution," is published, and his discourses on *Regeneration*, were in the number of his evening lectures. Whatever services he had performed on the Lord's-day, when there was no evening lecture, he repeated his sermons to his own family, and as many of his people and neighbours as chose to attend, at his own house; and then sometimes entered into a few critical remarks on his text, and learned reflections on his subject, for the benefit of his pupils, which would have been unprofitable to a popular auditory.—It was his usual custom, on a Lord's-day morning, before sermon, to expound some portion of the scriptures, and draw practical instructions from it; directing his hearers, at

* This is the language of wisdom. True eloquence consists in the union of the rational, the forcible, and the pathetic; and to address to the affections, as well as to the reason of mankind, is the dictate of the soundest philosophy. The cold and feeble conclusions of many discourses from the pulpit, are as disgusting to a just taste, as they are unprofitable with regard to religious improvement.—K.

the same time, in what manner they should read and reflect upon the word of God.—He had an extraordinary gift in prayer, cultivated with great diligence; and upon particular as well as common occasions expressed himself with ease, freedom and variety, with all the evidences of a solid judgment, amidst the greatest seriousness and fervour of spirit. In the administration of the Lord's-supper he was remarkably devout and lively. He endeavoured to affect the hearts and excite the graces of his fellow christians by devotional meditations upon some pertinent passages of Scripture; that the substance of what he had said might be more easily recollected. He took the same method in administering the ordinance of baptism.——The hymns which he composed to assist the devotions of his congregation, have been published, and are another instance of the pains he took to promote their piety.

Besides his stated work on the Lord's-day and his lectures preparatory to the Lord's-supper, he maintained a religious exercise every Friday evening at his Meeting-place, or his own house, as the season of the year, or the circumstances of his health, rendered most convenient. On these occasions he went through the psalms in a course of exposition; afterwards the prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the Messiah and his kingdom; the promises of scripture; and sometimes repeated sermons he had formerly preached, as his friends particularly desired or might best tend to keep up an agreeable variety. For several winters he preached a lecture, every Thursday evening, at another Meeting-house in the town, which lying nearer the centre of it, was more convenient than his own. There he preached a set of discourses on the parables of Christ; and another on the nature, offices and operations of the holy Spirit.——As a great part of his congregation came from the neighbouring villages he used to go once or twice a year to each of them, and to some oftner, and preach among them. He chose to make these visits at the usual festivals and their respective wakes, as the inhabitants at those seasons had leisure to attend his services, and were in some peculiar danger of having their sense of religion weakened. At these visits he had opportunities of conversing and praying with the infirm and aged, who could seldom attend his labours at Northampton. When any of them died, he chose to preach their Funeral-sermons in the villages where they had lived, that their neighbours and acquaintance might have the benefit of them.

While I am mentioning his abilities, diligence and zeal as a preacher, I would add, that he was much esteemed and very

popular. He had an earnestness and pathos in his manner of speaking, which, as it seemed to be the natural effect of a strong impression of divine truths upon his own heart, tended greatly to affect his hearers, and to render his discourses more acceptable and useful, than if his delivery had been more calm and dispassionate. His pronunciation and action were, by some judges, thought rather too strong and vehement; but to those who were acquainted with the vivacity of his temper and his usual manner of conversation, they appeared quite natural and unaffected.

He was very exact in the exercise of christian discipline, and in separating from the church those, who were a reproach to their christian profession. To this painful work he was sometimes called, and a congregational fast was kept on the sad occasion.——When the work of religion seemed to be at a stand; when few or none appeared to be under serious impressions and convictions, or there was a visible coldness and remissness among his hearers, his heart was much affected; he laboured and prayed more earnestly, both in public and private; and days of prayer were set apart by the church, in order to obtain of God an effusion of his Spirit to revive religion among them.

He had a deep concern and affectionate regard for the rising generation. Besides an annual sermon to young persons on new year's day, he often particularly addressed them in the course of his preaching; and in his conversation also, discovered that sense of the importance of the rising generation, which he hath expressed in his sermon upon that subject, and which he hath so warmly exhorted parents to cultivate, in his *Sermons on the Education of Children.* He much lamented the growing neglect of ministers to catechise the children of their congregations; and to this neglect imputed many of the irregularities, which are to be seen in youth. Many parents are hardly capable of it; and many, who are, neglect it. He therefore looked upon this, as a most important part of his pastoral work, and pursued it, during the summer-seasons, through the whole course of his ministry, notwithstanding his many avocations. He was so sensible of the usefulness of this work, and the skill and prudence necessary to conduct it, that I find this, among other resolutions, formed at his entrance on the ministry, 'I will often make it my humble prayer, that God would teach me to speak to children in such a manner, as may make early impressions of religion upon their hearts.' He had much satisfaction in these pious attempts. Several children, who died while they were under his catechetical instructions, mani-

fested such a deep sense of religion, such rational views and lively hopes of glory, as were delightful and edifying to their parents and friends.——He established and encouraged private meetings for social prayer; especially religious associations among the young persons of the congregation, who used to meet weekly for reading, religious discourse and prayer; and entered into engagements to watch over one another in the spirit of meekness, and to animate and encourage each other in their christian course. These societies were formed according to their different ages; and sometimes one young person of the greatest knowledge and humility was a kind of president, who kept up the order of the society, and gave the pastor hints by which he might be led to establish those who were wavering, and encourage those who were timorous in religion. There was one society of young men, in which some of his younger students were joined, to which he used to propose some practical question weekly, and they returned an answer in writing the next week. These answers he threw together, enlarged upon and delivered on Friday evening, instead of his usual exposition or sermon as above-mentioned. He found the advantage of these associations in many respects; particularly in the readiness, with which those, who had belonged to them, set up the worship of God in their own families, and the honourable manner, in which they conducted it.—He was very solicitous to bring sober and serious young persons into communion with the church, and obviate their objections against it. His reasons for this, and the arguments by which he urged it, may be seen in his discourse to young people, entitled, "Religious Youth invited to early Communion."

To those who were acquainted with the large sphere of service in which he was engaged, it was matter of surprise, that he could spare so much time, as he did, for pastoral visits; as there were few days in which he was not employed in visiting the sick and afflicted, and other persons, with a view to their spiritual interest. He knew the value of time too well, to spend it in formal, unprofitable or long visits. He was careful, when he went into any family, to turn the discourse into a religious channel and leave an impression of piety behind him. He seriously exhorted heads of families to mind religion as the main concern, to guard against the love of the world, and to *command their children and household to keep the way of the Lord.* He took notice of the children and servants in families, gave them hints of advice and encouragement, proposed to them some texts of scripture to remember and reflect upon, and furnished

them with bibles and practical books. He visited the cottages of the poor, and addressed them with so much condescension and familiarity, that they would be free in their conversation with him upon religious concerns and the state of their souls. No visits gave him more satisfaction than these; and he often expressed his wonder and grief, that any ministers should neglect such persons, out of too much regard to those who were rich, or to any studies not essential to usefulness.—But finding that, with his utmost diligence, he could not visit all the families in so large and scattered a society, so often as he wished, he, on December 4, 1737, proposed to the congregation to chuse four persons of distinguished piety, gravity and experience to the office of elders; which they accordingly did. He thought there was a foundation for that office in scripture; at least, that the circumstances of some pastors and churches rendered it expedient, that there should be such officers chosen; who should inspect the state of the church, and assist the pastor in some part of his work*. These elders divided the congregation among them, visited and prayed with the sick, took notice of and conversed with those, who seemed to be under religious impressions or were proposed to communion; and were sometimes employed in admonishing and exhorting. They met together weekly, and he generally attended them; that he might receive the observations they had made, and might give them his assistance and advice, where cases of peculiar difficulty occurred. These meetings were always concluded with prayer. He found great comfort and advantage from their services, and the church thought itself happy in them.

It was a grief to him to find, that the children of some of his hearers had never been taught to read, through the ignorance or poverty of their parents. Therefore, in 1738, he persuaded his people to concur with him in establishing a charity school. To this end, they agreed to contribute certain sums, weekly or yearly, as their respective circumstances would admit. He had the satisfaction to find, that this benevolent design met with so much encouragement, that there was a foundation laid for instructing and cloathing twenty boys. These were selected and put under the care of a pious skilful master, who taught them to read, write and learn their catechism, and brought them regularly to public worship. An anniversary sermon was preached and a collection made for the benefit of the school. Several of the Doctor's friends at a distance, often gave gene-

* Theological Lectures.

rous benefactions of money or books for the use of the school; by which, and from himself, the children were supplied with bibles, catechisms and other proper books. He often visited the school, to support the master's authority and respect, to examine the proficiency of the children, catechise, instruct and pray with them; and the trustees visited it weekly by rotation, to observe the behaviour and improvement of the children, and to receive the master's report concerning them. This institution has been serviceable to the temporal and eternal interest of many, who might otherwise have been exposed to great ignorance and wretchedness; and it is still kept up by the congregation on the same plan, though it wants some of those advantages, which it derived from the Doctor's large acquaintance and influence.—These are some sketches of the manner in which he fulfilled his ministry: And I have insisted the more largely upon this subject, as it may furnish some hints, which may be useful to those, who are engaged in the same important work, or are training up for it.

The Doctor took great pains to preserve upon his mind a deep sense of the importance of his office, that he might discharge it in the best manner possible; and to maintain a fervent affection for his people, as what would contribute to make his labours easy to himself, and acceptable and useful to them. He kept a memorandum book on his desk, in which he set down hints, as they occurred to him, of what might be done for the good of the congregation; of persons to be visited, the manner of addressing them, and many such particulars. At the close of every year he took a large and distinct view of its state, wrote some remarks upon it, and laid down rules for his future conduct in his relation to it.—He was pleased when he had opportunities of attending the ordinations of his brethren; and when he returned from them, considered his own concern in them, as a minister, and renewed, before God, his engagements to fidelity. After one of these services he thus writes: "At this ordination, I preached from Heb. xiii. 17, *They watch for your souls, as they that must give account.* It was a solemn, useful day, and left some deep impressions on my heart. I would remember that, teaching others, I teach myself. I have many cares and labours. May God forgive me, that I am so apt to forget those of the pastoral office! I now resolve, 1. To take a more particular account of the souls committed to my care. 2. To visit, as soon as possible, the whole congregation, to learn more particularly the circumstances of them, their

children and servants. 3. I will make as exact a list as I can, of those that I have reason to believe are unconverted, awakened, converted, fit for communion, as well as those that are in it. 4. When I hear any thing particular, relating to the religious state of my people, I will visit them and talk with them. 5. I will especially be careful to visit the sick. I will begin immediately with inspection over those under my own roof, that I may with the greater freedom urge other heads of families to a like care. O my soul, thy account is great. It is high time, that it be got into better order. Lord, I hope thou knowest, I am desirous of approving myself a faithful servant of thee, and of souls. O, watch over me, that I may watch over them; and then, all will be well. Continue these things on the imagination of my heart, that my own sermon may not another day, rise up in judgment against me."—This is a specimen of his reflections and resolutions on such occasions, which were answered in his general conduct.

The reader will not wonder, that, amidst such great and uncommon pains to serve his congregation, and promote their present and eternal happiness, he should be *esteemed by them highly in love for his work's sake:* And indeed few ministers have been more esteemed and beloved by their people, than he was by his. At his first settlement among them, his ministry was attended with extraordinary success, and many were added to the church; and during the whole course of his services, it continued very numerous and flourishing. In some of them indeed he had grief: Some whose tempers were uncharitable; others who were seduced by the errors of the Moravians, and whom he endeavoured in vain to reclaim; and a few of them proved notoriously vicious: Nor is it surprising that in so large a congregation there should be some disobedient to the word, and incorrigible under the best means and most vigorous, affectionate attempts to reclaim and save them; but God over-ruled these disappointments for his good. When he had recorded some of these trials, he adds, " God hath sanctified all these grievances to me; hath made me more humble, more watchful, more mortified to this vain world, and its interests and enjoyments, than I ever remember to have found myself. He has visited me from time to time with such strong consolations, with such delightful effusions of his love, that, in this connection, I am his debtor for all these afflictions; and from this growing experience of his goodness, I am encouraged, and have determined, to leave myself with him, and to have no will, no interest of my own, separate from his. I have been renewing the

dedication of myself and services to him, with as entire a consent of heart, as I think myself capable of feeling; and with that calm acquiescence in him, as my portion and happiness, which I would not resign for ten thousand worlds."—But in far the greater part of the church under his care he had much comfort, and daily *rejoiced over them in the Lord.* So entire was the friendship that subsisted between them, that he declined invitations to settle in other places, particularly in London, where his secular interest would have been much advanced, out of the love he bore to his Northampton friends. His great concern was to do as much service for them, and be as little burthensome to them, as possible; for he sought not theirs, but them. And most of them, in return, studied to honour and serve him, to strengthen his hands, and encourage his labours. He reckoned the providence, which fixed him with them, among the most singular blessings of his life; and in his last will, where he could not be suspected of flattery, he bears testimony to their character, observing, "that he had spent the most delightful hours of his life, in assisting the devotions of as serious, as grateful, and as deserving a people, as perhaps any minister ever had the honour and happiness to serve."—I mention this circumstance, as a motive to those of them, who yet remain, not to forfeit the character he gave of them; and principally, as an encouragement to ministers to imitate his diligence, zeal, moderation and contentment, if they wish to share in the esteem, comfort and success, with which he was honoured.

CHAP. VI.

His Method of Education and Behaviour as a Tutor.

IT has been already observed (Chap. III.) what pains Dr. Doddridge took to furnish himself for this important and difficult office, upon what principles he had undertaken it, and what encouragement he met with in it, before his removal to Northampton. Upon his settlement there, and his worth being more known, the number of his pupils increased, so that in the year 1734, he found it needful to have an assistant in this work, to whom he assigned part of the care of the junior pupils, and the direction of the academy, during his absence.* He was

* Such of them as I have been acquainted with, were very respectable for their knowledge; and in the choice of them a particular regard was paid to their

solicitous to maintain the esteem of his successive assistants in the family, by his own behaviour to them, and the respect, which he required from the students to them: And they thought themselves happy in his friendship, and the opportunities they had, by his converse, instructions and example, to improve themselves, while they were assisting in the education of others.

As the method of education in the seminaries of protestant dissenters is little known, it may be proper to give some general account of his; which bears a near resemblance to others of the kind. He chose to have as many of his students in his own family as his house would contain, that they might be more immediately under his eye and government. The orders of this seminary were such, as suited a society of students; in a due medium between the rigour of school discipline, and an unlimited indulgence. As he knew that diligence in redeeming their time was necessary to their attention to business, and improvement of their minds, it was an established law, that every student should rise at six o'clock in the summer, and seven in the winter. A monitor was weekly appointed to call them, and they were to appear in the public room, soon after the fixed hour. Those who did not appear were subject to a pecuniary penalty, or, if that did not cure their sloth, to prepare an additional academical exercise; and the monitor's neglect was a double fine. Their tutor set them an example of diligence, being generally present with them at these early hours. When they were thus assembled, a prayer was offered up, suited to their circumstances, as students, by himself when present, or by them in their turns. Then they retired to their respective closets till the time of family worship. The Doctor began that service with a short prayer for the divine presence and blessing. Some of the students read a chapter of the Old Testament from Hebrew into English, which he expounded critically, and drew practical inferences from it; a psalm was then sung and he prayed. But on Lord's-day mornings something entirely devotional and practical was read instead of the usual exposition. In the evening, the worship was conducted in the same method, only a chapter of the New Testament was read by the students from Greek into English, which he expounded; and the senior students in rotation prayed. They, who boarded in other houses

skill in the Greek and Latin Classics, as well as to their ability for instructing the young men in certain departments of mathematical and philosophical science. Among Dr. Doddridge's assistants, besides Mr. Orton, may be named the late Rev. Dr. Aikin, and the Rev. Mr. James Robertson, who has been for many years professor of oriental literature in the university of Edinburgh.—K.

in the town, were obliged to attend his family worship and take their turns in reading and prayer, as well as to perform it in the several houses where they lived. Those who were absent from it were subject to a fine, and, if it were frequent, to a public reprehension before the whole society. By this method of conducting the religious services of his family, his pupils had an opportunity, during their course, of hearing him expound most of the Old Testament, and all the New Testament more than once, to their improvement as students and christians. He recommended it to them to take hints of his illustrations and remarks, as what would be useful to them in future life, especially if their situation or circumstances prevented their having the works of the best commentators. He advised them to get the Old Testament and Wetstein's Greek Testament, interleaved in quarto, in which to write the most considerable remarks for the illustration of the scriptures, which occurred in his expositions, and in their own reading, conversation and reflections. The Family Expositor sufficiently shews, how worthy his remarks were of being written and retained, and how his family was daily entertained and instructed.—Soon after breakfast, he took the several classes in their order and lectured to each about an hour. His lectures were generally confined to the morning; as he chose to devote the afternoon to his private studies and pastoral visits. His assistant was employed at the same time in lecturing to those, whom he had more immediately under his care. He has given some general account of the course of his pupils' studies in his short memoirs of the life and character of Mr. Thomas Steffe, so that I have little more to do on this head, than transcribe it.

One of the first things he expected from his pupils, was to learn Rich's short hand, which he wrote himself, and in which his lectures were written; that they might transcribe them, make extracts from the books they read and consulted, with ease and speed, and save themselves many hours in their future compositions. Care was taken in the first year of their course, that they should retain and improve that knowledge of Greek and Latin, which they had acquired at school, and gain such knowledge of Hebrew, if they had not learned it before, that they might be able to read the Old Testament in its original language: A care very important and necessary! To this end, besides the course of lectures in a morning, classical lectures were read every evening, generally by his assistant, but sometimes by himself. If any of his pupils were deficient in their knowledge of Greek, the seniors, who were best skilled in it, were appointed

to instruct them at other times. Those of them, who chose it, were also taught French. He was more and more convinced, the longer he lived, of the great importance of a learned, as well as a pious education for the ministry: And finding that some who came under his care were not competently acquainted with classical knowledge, he formed a scheme to assist youths in their preparations for academical studies, who discovered a promising genius and a serious temper. He met with encouragement in this scheme from the countenance and contributions of many of his friends, and had some instructed under his eye; but as it only commenced about two years before his death, much progress could not be made in it.*—Systems of logic, rhetoric, geography and metaphysics were read during the first year of their course, and they were referred to particular passages in other authors upon these subjects, which illustrated the points, on which the lectures had turned.† To these were added lectures on the principles of geometry and algebra. These studies taught them to keep their attention fixed, to distinguish their ideas with accuracy and to dispose their arguments in a clear, concise and convincing manner.—After these studies were finished, they were introduced to the knowledge of trigonometry, conic sections and celestial mechanics.‡ A system of natural and experimental philosophy, comprehending mechanics, statics, hydrostatics, optics, pneumatics, and astronomy, was read to them; with references to the best authors on these subjects.‖ This system was illustrated by a neat and pretty large philosophical apparatus; part of which was the gift of some of his friends, and the remainder purchased

* Dr. Doddridge was not, in every instance, so attentive to the classical preparation of the students received into his seminary as could have been wished. Sometimes he admitted serious young men, of perhaps three or four and twenty years of age, who had very little of that preparation, and who never distinguished themselves in this respect, by their subsequent improvement. He thought, however, that they might be useful in plain country congregations; which was undoubtedly the case. Several of them, though not abounding in learning, sustained the ministerial character with a decent reputation.—K.

† The logic was Dr. Watts's, which was very fully pursued. On rhetoric the lectures were slender and imperfect, being only a slight enlargement of a small compendium that had been drawn up by Mr. Jennings. Geography was better taught; but of metaphysics there was only given at this time a brief epitome, as the great objects it presents, were afterwards more amply considered.—K.

‡ A collection of important propositions, taken chiefly from Sir Isaac Newton, and demonstrated, independent on the rest. They relate especially, though not only, to centripetal and centrifugal forces.

‖ Muschenbroeck was made use of in my time as a text book, and afterwards Rowning. For the particular objects to which they relate, recourse was had to Clare on Fluids, and Keill's Astronomy.—K.

by a small contribution from each of the students at his entrance on that branch of science. Some other articles were touched upon, especially history, natural and civil, as the students proceeded in their course, in order to enlarge their understandings and give them venerable ideas of the works and providence of God.* A distinct view of the anatomy of the human body was given them, as it tended to promote their veneration and love for the great architect of this amazing frame, whose wonders of providential influence also are so apparent in its support, nourishment and motion: and all concurred to render them agreeable and useful in conversation, and to subserve their honourable appearance in the ministry.—A large system of Jewish antiquities, which their tutor had drawn up, was read to them in the latter years of their course, in order to illustrate numberless passages in the scriptures, which cannot be well understood without a knowledge of them. In this branch of science likewise, they were referred to the best writers upon the subject. Lampe's Epitome of Ecclesiastical History was the ground work of a series of lectures upon that subject; as was Buddæi Compendium Historiæ Philosophicæ of lectures on the doctrines of the ancient philosophers in their various sects.

But the chief object of their attention and study, during three years of their course, was his system of divinity, in the largest extent of the word; including what is most material in pneumatology and ethics. In this Compendium were contained, in as few words as perspicuity would admit, the most material things which had occurred to the author's observation, relating to the nature and properties of the human mind, the proof of the existence and attributes of God, the nature of moral virtue, the various branches of it, the means subservient to it, and the sanctions by which its precepts, considered as God's natural law, are enforced; under which head the natural evidence of the immortality of the soul was largely examined. To this was added some survey of what is, and generally has been, the state of virtue in the world; from whence the transition was easy to the need of a revelation, the encouragement to hope for it, and the nature of the evidence, which might probably attend it. From hence the work naturally proceeded to the evidence produced in proof of that revelation, which the scriptures contain. The genuineness, credibility and inspiration of these sacred books

* Mr. Orton mentions particularly, natural and civil history; but these two objects do not fall under my recollection. At most they were scarcely enough considered to deserve a distinct specification.—K.

were then cleared up at large, and vindicated from the most considerable objections, which infidels have urged. When this foundation was laid, the chief doctrines of scripture were drawn out into a large detail; those relating to the Father, Son and Spirit, to the original and fallen state of man, to the scheme of our redemption by Christ, and the offices of the Spirit, as the great agent in the Redeemer's kingdom. The nature of the covenant of grace was particularly stated, and the several precepts and institutions of the gospel, with the views which it gives us of the concluding scenes of our world and of the eternal state beyond it. What seemed most evident on these heads was thrown into the propositions, some of which were problematical; and the chief controversies relating to each were thrown into the Scholia; and all illustrated by a very large collection of references, containing perhaps, one lecture with another, the substance of forty or fifty octavo pages, in which the sentiments and reasonings of the most considerable authors on all these heads, might be seen in their own words. It was the business of the students to read and contract these references, in the intervals between the lectures; of which, only three were given in a week, and sometimes but two. This was the author's capital work, as a tutor. He had spent much labour upon it, and was continually enriching it with his remarks on any new productions upon the several subjects handled in it. This system his pupils transcribed. It is now published; and the world will judge of its value and suitableness to answer the end proposed, and will observe how judiciously it was calculated to lead the students gradually on from the principles, to the most important and difficult parts of theological knowledge. His heart was much set upon their diligent application to the study of this system; and the rather, as he thought the study of divinity was too much neglected in many seminaries, and other branches of science of infinitely less importance in themselves, especially to persons intended for the ministry, were too closely pursued*.——Besides the expositions in the family, above men-

* I am no stranger to the character that was given of this work in the Monthly Review. But that Account of it was drawn up in so very injudicious and uncandid a manner, and the author of that article appeared to be so utterly unacquainted with the subject he wrote upon, that no intelligent reader could be much influenced by it. The Doctor's friends therefore thought it needless to enter into a particular confutation of it, and chose to trust the work to make its way by its own merit and the character of its author.

As another edition may soon be demanded, it may not be amiss to suggest, that it would be extremely useful to enlarge the list of references, by introducing the names and productions of those writers who have treated upon the several matters

tioned, critical lectures on the New Testament were weekly delivered, which the students were permitted and encouraged to transcribe, to lead them to the better knowledge of the divine oracles. These contained his remarks on the language, meaning and design of the sacred writers, and the interpretations and criticisms of the most considerable commentators. Many of these he has inserted in the Family Expositor*.—Polite literature he by no means neglected; nor will it be despised by any but those who know not what it is: yet "he could not think it the one thing needful: he thought the sacred scriptures were the grand magazine, whence the most important, and therefore by far the greatest number of, academical lectures were to be drawn."——In the last year of the course, a set of lectures on preaching and the pastoral care was given. These contained general directions concerning the method to be taken to furnish them for the work of preaching; the character of the best practical writers and commentators upon the bible; many particular rules for the composition of sermons, their proper style, the choice and arrangement of thoughts, and the delivery of them; directions relating to public prayer, exposition, catechising, the administration of the sacraments and pastoral visits. To these were added many general maxims for their conversation and conduct as ministers, and a variety of prudential rules for their behaviour in particular circumstances and connections, in which they might be placed†.——While the students were pursuing these important studies, some lectures were given them on civil law, the hieroglyphics and mythology of the ancients, the English history, particularly the history of Non-conformity, and the principles, on which a se-

in question since the Doctor's decease. To a person conversant in the history of controversies this would be no very difficult task; and it might, in particular, easily be executed by any gentleman who, as a tutor, has made use of the lectures as a text book, and who consequently has been in the habit of referring to succeeding authors.

* No inconsiderable advantage was derived from the Doctor's being himself a man of taste, and a master of elegant composition. Without much direct instruction, the remarks which he occasionally and frequently made on the best writers, ancient and modern, were of great utility. The students, too, especially those of a classical turn, cherished in each other, by their discussions and debates, the principles of discernment with regard to the beauties of authors, whether in prose or verse.—K.

† These were never printed, but will be found in the course of the present edition of the author's works.

paration from the church of England is founded*. The tutor principally insisted upon those laid down by Dr. Calamy, in his introduction to the second volume of his Defence of Moderate Non-conformity; being of the same opinion with Mr. Locke, who sent Dr. Calamy word, that "he had read his introduction, and that while the protestant dissenters kept close to those principles, they would sufficiently maintain their ground, and justify their separation from any established, national church, if that church should assume an authority to impose things, which ought to be left indifferent†."

One day in every week was set apart for public exercises. At these times the translations and orations of the junior students were read and examined. Those who had entered on the study of pneumatology and ethics, produced in their turns theses on the several subjects assigned them, which were mutually opposed and defended. Those who had finished ethics delivered homilies, (as they were called, to distinguish them from sermons) on the natural and moral perfections of God, and the several branches of moral virtue ‡; while the senior students brought analyses of scripture, the schemes of sermons, and afterwards the sermons themselves, which they submitted to the examination and correction of their tutor. In this part of his work he was very exact, careful and friendly; esteeming his remarks on their compositions more useful to young preachers, than any general rules of composition, which could be offered them by those, who were themselves most eminent in the profession. In this view, he furnished them with subordinate thoughts and proper scriptures for proof or illustration, retrenching what was superfluous and adding what was wanting.

It was his care, through the whole course of their studies, that his pupils might have such a variety of lectures weekly, as might engage and entertain their minds without distracting them. While they were attending and studying lectures of the greatest importance, some of less importance, though useful in them-

* Such lectures might, I doubt not, be occasionally read; but they made no stated and regular part of the academical course. None of them, excepting those on Non-conformity, were delivered during my residence at Northampton. I speak with the greater confidence on the subject, as I was never absent from a single lecture, till the last month of my course, when I was prevented from attending on two or three Mondays, in consequence of having been engaged at a distance, as an occasional preacher.

† Mayo's Funeral Sermon for Dr. Calamy, page 26.

‡ But no such homilies, as distinct from orations and theses, occur to my recollection. Indeed, I am convinced that the distinction did not take place in my time.—K.

selves, were given in the intervals. These had generally some connection with the former, and all were adapted to make *the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* He contrived, that they should have as much to read, between each lecture, as might keep them well employed; allowing due time for necessary relaxations, and the reading of practical writers. He recommended it to them and strongly insisted upon it, that they should converse with some of these daily, especially on the Lord's-day, in order to subserve at once the improvement of the christian and the minister; and he frequently reminded them, that it argued a great defect of understanding, as well as of real piety, if they were negligent herein*— He often examined what books they read, besides those to which they were referred in their lectures, and directed them to those, which were best suited to their age, capacities and intended profession: And in this respect, they enjoyed a great privilege, as they had the use of a large and valuable library consisting of several thousand volumes: Many of them the Doctor had purchased himself; others were the donation of his friends, or their several authors; and each student at his admission contributed a small sum towards enlarging the collection: The student's name was inserted in the book or books purchased with his contribution, and it was considered as his gift. To this library the students had access at all times, under some prudent regulations as to the time of keeping the books. The tutor was sensible that a well furnished library would be a snare, rather than a benefit to a student, except he had the advice of a more experienced friend in the choice of those he should read; as he might throw away his time in those, which were of little importance, or anticipate the perusal of others, which might more properly be reserved to some future time. To prevent this, he sometimes gave his pupils lectures on the books in the library; going over the several shelves in order; informing them of the character of each book and its author, if known; at what period of their course, and with what special views particular books should be read; and which of them it was desirable they should be most familiarly acquainted and furnished with, when they settled in the world†. His pupils took hints of these lec-

* Few things can more effectually contribute to improve the understanding and mend the heart, and to fit a young man for ministerial duty and usefulness, than a large acquaintance with that most valuable part of literature, the great body of English sermons, and of compositions which have a similar nature and tendency.—K.

† His observations were not only instructive but pleasant; being often intermixed with anecdotes of the writers who were mentioned. My mind still retains, with advantage and pleasure, the impression of many of his remarks.—K.

tures, which at once displayed the surprising extent of his reading and knowledge, and were in many respects very useful to them.

The Doctor's manner of lecturing was well adapted to engage the attention and love of his pupils, and promote their diligent study of the lectures. When the class was assembled, he examined them in the last lecture; whether they understood his reasoning; what the authors referred to, said upon the subject; whether he had given them a just view of their sentiments, arguments and objections, or omitted any that were important? He expected from them an account of the reasoning, demonstrations, scriptures, or facts contained in the lecture and references. He allowed and encouraged them to propose any objections, which might arise in their own minds, or which they met with in the authors referred to, of which they did not think there was a sufficient solution in the lecture: Or to mention any texts that were misapplied, or from which particular consequences might not be fairly drawn; and to propose others, which either confirmed or contradicted what he advanced: And if at any time their objections were petulant or impertinent, he patiently heard and mildly answered them.

He was solicitous that they should thoroughly understand his lectures, and what he said for the illustration of them: If he observed any of them inattentive, or thought they did not sufficiently understand what he was saying, he would ask them what he had said, that he might keep up their attention and know whether he expressed himself clearly. He put on no magisterial airs, never intimidated nor discouraged them, but always addressed them with the freedom and tenderness of a father. He never expected nor desired, that they should blindly follow his sentiments, but permitted and encouraged them to judge for themselves. To assist them herein, he laid before them what he apprehended to be the truth with all perspicuity, and impartially stated all objections to it. He never concealed the difficulties, which affected any question, but referred them to writers on both sides, without hiding any from their inspection. He frequently and warmly urged them, not to take their system of divinity from any man or body of men, but from the word of God. The bible was always referred and appealed to, upon every point in question, to which it could be supposed to give any light. Of his honesty and candour in this respect, the world has had a sufficient proof in his Theological Lectures.——He resolutely checked any appearances of bigotry and uncharitableness; and endeavoured to cure them, by shewing the guilty persons the

weakness of their understandings, and what might be said in defence of those principles, which they disliked; reminding them at the same time of the great learning and excellent character of many who had espoused them. He much discouraged a haughty way of thinking and speaking; "especially when it discovered itself in a petulant inclination to employ their talents at satire, in ridiculing the infirmities of plain, serious christians, or the labours of those ministers, who are willing to condescend to the meanest capacities, that they may be *wise to win souls.*"

It was his great aim to give them just and sublime views of the ministry, for which they were preparing, and lead them to direct all their studies so as to increase their furniture and qualifications for it. To this end he endeavoured "to possess them with a deep sense of the importance of the gospel-scheme for the recovery of man from the ruins of the apostacy, and his restoration to God and happiness, by a mediator; to shew them that this was the great end of the divine counsels and dispensations; to point out what Christ and his apostles did to promote it; to display before them those generous emotions of soul, which still live and breathe in the New Testament: And then, when their minds were warmed with such a survey, to apply to them, as persons designed by providence to engage in the same work, to support and carry on the same interest, who therefore must be actuated by the same views and imbibe the same spirit. He thought such as these the most important lectures a tutor could read; tending to fill the minds of his pupils with noble and elevated views, and to convince them, that the salvation of one soul was of infinitely greater importance, than charming a thousand splendid assemblies with the most elegant discourses that ever were delivered. He thought such a zeal and tenderness would arise from these views, as would form a minister to a popular address, abundantly sooner and more happily, than the most judicious rules which it is possible to lay down.*——He frequently inculcated upon them the necessity of preaching Christ, if they desired to save souls; of dwelling much upon the peculiarities of the gospel-scheme, and the doctrines of Christ and the spirit; of considering their own concern in them, and endeavouring to feel their energy on their own spirits, that they might appear to their hearers as giving vent to the fulness of their hearts on its darling subjects.

He was desirous that his pupils should be experimental preachers, and have those peculiar advantages, which nothing

* Sermons and Tracts, Vol. II.

but an acquaintance with cases, and an observation of facts can give. That they should be well acquainted with the various exercises of the soul, relating to its eternal concerns, by reading the best writers upon the subject, and carefully observing the workings of their own hearts. He recommended it to them, frequently to handle these subjects with seriousness and tenderness, which would increase a people's esteem for them and their labours, encourage them to be free in communicating the state of their souls, and contribute to edify and comfort their pious hearers. To qualify them for this part of their work, he not only gave them the best directions, but often took them with him, if the circumstances of the case and the family rendered it proper, when he went to baptise children, to visit persons under awakenings of conscience, religious impressions or spiritual distress; or those that were sick and dying; that they might see his manner of conversing and praying with them, and have their own hearts improved by such affecting scenes. With the same view he introduced them to the acquaintance of some serious persons of his congregation. He thought a knowledge of their hidden worth and acquaintance with religion, and hearing their observations concerning the temper, character and labours of deceased ministers, would improve the minds of his pupils, and increase their esteem for the populace in general. He imagined that from their remarks on books and sermons, and their account of the various exercises of their own minds, where politer persons are generally more reserved, they might learn how to address to those of a low education, and be formed to an experimental strain of preaching. It was his frequent caution, that they should not despise the common people, nor think condescension to them, to be mean and unworthy of a scholar; that they should not refuse settlements, where they might be useful, because there were few wealthy, judicious and polite in the congregation: It was his advice, that in such situations, they should endeavour to improve the understandings of their hearers and make company of them; assuring them, from his own observation and experience, that they would find plain serious christians some of their most steady, affectionate friends, and their greatest joy. He exhorted them to study the temper of their people, that they might, so far as they could with conscience and honour, render themselves agreeable to them in their ministrations and converse. Thus they might hope gradually to bring them off their attachment to particular phrases and modes, prevent differences, and so far secure their affections, that they would not be disposed to differ with, or complain of, a minister, who

shewed himself moderate and condescending, and at the same time applied himself diligently to his great work, though their sentiments and his should in some respects disagree.—That they might be qualified to appear with esteem and honour in the world, and preside over politer societies with acceptance, he not only led them through a course of polite literature; but endeavoured to form them to an agreeable behaviour and address; maintaining the strictest decorum in his own family, and animadverting upon every trespass of it. To this end likewise, he observed their way of speaking, instructed them in the proper manner of pronunciation, and laboured to prevent their contracting any unnatural tone or gesture: And while he was cautioning them upon this head, he had the humility to warn them, not to imitate himself in an error of this kind, which he was sensible of, but could not entirely correct. To assist them herein, they often read to him, and he was desirous that they should sometimes preach before him, that he might put them into a method of correcting what was improper in their manner, before it was formed into a habit.

Another method taken to render them able ministers of the New Testament was this; The senior students for the ministry, before they began to preach, used, on the Lord's-day evenings, to visit the neighbouring villages, and hold private meetings for religious worship in some licensed houses there. Two of them generally went together: A serious sermon on some uncontroverted and important subject of religion was repeated, and one of them prayed before and the other after it, with proper intervals of singing. This custom was very useful, both in exercising the gifts of the students, giving them a proper degree of courage, when they appeared in public assemblies; abating the prejudices some have entertained against the way of worship amongst Dissenters, spreading the knowledge of divine things, and instructing and comforting some, whose circumstances prevented their attending, where they would have chosen to spend the sabbath. When the assembly was dismissed, a few serious people would often stay, and spend some time in religious discourse with the persons who had been officiating. In such schools as these they learned, what no academical lectures alone could have taught them with equal advantage.

It was an instance of the Doctor's great concern for his pupils' improvement, that, as often as his other business would permit, he allowed them access to him in his own study; to ask his advice in any part of their studies, to mention to him any difficulties, which they met with in their private reading, or the

which they did not chuse to propose in the lecture [illegible] he encouraged them to ask his opinion of any texts of [illegible] they did not understand; and he explained them and [illegible] them to particular commentators, who threw light upon them. He was solicitous to improve all those moments, which he spent with them, for their advantage. He therefore used frequently at meals to enquire of them, in order, what they had been reading, or what texts they had, according to his general direction, chosen for the subject of that day's pious meditation; and would make such reflections upon them, as might be serviceable to them all as students and christians.——From these particulars it appears, what pains he took that they might be qualified for usefulness in the ministry, or other stations, for which they were intended.——He sometimes expressed his fears, least some of his pupils, who were intended for trade, should be so fond of books and studies, as to neglect a proper application to it; he gave them many friendly cautions upon this head, and often suggested to them important maxims, by attending to which, they might carry on their business with honour and success, and at the same time improve in a moral and religious character*.

* As more of the young persons intended for trade enjoy an academical education now, than formerly, it may be useful to such to read some advices, which, in the year 1726, he wrote to a young man, who had a taste for reading and learning, and was entering into a merchant's compting-house, after he had left the academy. "You urge me to send you some directions about the management of your studies. I may hereafter give you some hints upon the several subjects, which I suppose you would be inclinable to touch upon. I may open to you a magician's palace, which I myself have as yet taken but a transient survey of, without visiting each of its apartments to examine the curiosities contained there. But when I consider how rich the furniture is, and how exquisite a relish you have for the entertainment which it contains, methinks I am afraid you should grow too fond of it. The business therefore of this letter shall be, to intreat you to endeavour to bring your studies under such regulations, that they may not be injurious to health, or trade, or devotion.—As your constitution is not very athletic, if you should bear hard upon it by too close an attention to books or thought, the consequence would probably be, that, as soon as you had begun to adjust your ideas and fix your schemes for the future employment of life, you would find yourself incapable of prosecuting them, and may languish away the remainder of your days in absence from your study, when a small acquaintance with it hath made you sensible of its charms, and perhaps allured you to expect a great deal more satisfaction in it, than you would ever in fact have found. However, you would regret the loss in proportion to the expectation you had formed, whether regular or extravagant. I may add, that by impairing your health, you would become in a great measure unfit for that sphere of life, in which providence hath placed you.—Let us remember, my dear and prudent friend, that we are to place our point of life, not in an attempt to know and to do every thing, which will certainly be as unsuccessful, as it is extravagant; but in a care to do that well, which providence hath assigned us, as our peculiar business. As I am a minister, I could not answer it to God or my own conscience, if I were to spend a great deal of time in studying

But his main care, and what he apprehended essential to their usefulness, was, that they might be pious and holy men. With this view the strictest regard was paid to their moral character, and their behaviour out of the hours of study and lecture was narrowly inspected. Enquiry was made both of them and his friends in the town, what houses they frequented and what company they kept. No student was permitted to be from home after ten o'clock at night, under the penalty of a considerable forfeiture. When he found any thing irregular in their behaviour, or thought they were entering into temptation, he

the depths of the law, or in the more entertaining, though less useful, pursuit of the nicest criticisms of classical writers. I would not be entirely a stranger to these; but these or twenty others, which I would just look into, would each of them alone, or indeed any single branch of them, be the employment of a much longer life, than I can imagine that providence hath assigned to me. Should I suffer my *few sheep in the wilderness* to go on in ignorance of their bibles and a stupid neglect of their eternal salvation, while I am too busy to endeavour to reclaim them, God would call it but laborious idleness, and I must give up my account with great confusion. The thought with a very little variation may be applied to you. It is in the capacity of a tradesman, that you are to serve your family and country, and in that, your God. Therefore, though I would not have so fine a genius entirely discouraged from entertaining itself with the refined pleasures of a student; yet it would be imprudence to yourself, and an injury to the world, to spend so much time in your closet, as to neglect your warehouse; and to be so much taken up with volumes of philosophy or history, poetry or even divinity, as to forget to look into your books of accounts.—Above all, Sir, let it be your constant concern, that study may not interfere with devotion, nor engross that valuable time, which should be consecrated to the immediate service of your God. He is the Father of our spirits, and it is upon his sacred influences that they depend for improvement in knowledge as well as in holiness. If we are abandoned by him, our genius will flag, and all our thoughts become languid and confused. It will be in vain that we seek the assistance of books; for, when he ceaseth to act by them, the most sprightly writers will appear dull; the most perspicuous, obscure; and the most judicious, trifling. Whereas if we maintain a continued regard to him, in the constant exercises of lively devotion, we shall enjoy his assistance and blessing in our studies; and then our profiting will quickly appear to ourselves and others; the most difficult task will be easy, and we shall dispatch more in an hour, than we could otherwise have done in a day.—But, which is still more desirable, when we are conversing with God, we are preparing for that world of light, where our capacities will be most gloriously improved; where we shall be surrounded with the wisest and best company, who will be daily opening new scenes of knowledge; and where God will reveal objects by another kind of influence upon our spirits, than that which we have yet known in our brightest or serenest moments. Let us be constant and zealous in the service of God, and we shall be excellent scholars ten thousand years hence; while those, who have made the greatest improvements in human knowledge, yet have lived in neglect of God and religion, are forgotten upon earth and consigned over to the gloom of everlasting darkness. Let us remember, that by every hour which we take from God to give to our books, we forfeit some degree of future happiness, which might have been the reward of that hour, had we spent it aright: and when we consider that knowledge is a part of the happiness of heaven, we shall certainly find, that, upon the whole, we lose a great deal more knowledge, than we get, by such sacrilegious encroachment; even though our studies should succeed more prosperously, than we have reason to expect they will."

privately admonished them in the most serious, affectionate manner; and, to enforce the admonition, prayed with and for them. If these private admonitions had not the desired effect, the offender was admonished before the whole society at family worship; and if this proved ineffectual, he was publicly expelled the society.

On one such occasion I find him thus writing; "A very melancholy scene opened this day. We had some time spent in fasting and prayer, on account of an unhappy youth, whose folly and wickedness hath obliged me to dismiss him. I pronounced the solemn sentence of expulsion upon him, before the whole academy. I thank God, I was carried through this sad work with spirit; yet greatly afflicted to see all that I had endeavoured to do for his good, thrown away upon him. I had an opportunity of seeing in him the treachery of the human heart, the necessity of keeping near to God, and the tendency of bad practices to debauch the principles. God has exercised me in this instance with great trouble and disappointment: but *the disciple is not above his master.* Lord, may I approve my sincerity and zeal in thy sight, though it should be in every instance unsuccessful! Let me but hear thee saying, *well done good and faithful servant!* and none can hinder my joy." But it pleased God so to succeed his pious care, that there were very few instances, in which he was obliged to have recourse to so painful an expedient, to secure the honour of his family, and the safety of his other pupils.

But he could not be satisfied with their external regular behaviour, except he saw in them the genuine evidences of real religion. He thought no one ought to be encouraged to undertake the christian ministry, who was not a pious man: Therefore he advised some of his pupils, of whose real character he was doubtful, to apply themselves to secular business; while he grieved that any, who had this best qualification for ministerial usefulness, should decline it. He often inculcated upon them the absolute necessity of a heart thoroughly engaged for God and holiness, in order to pursue their work with comfort, acceptance and success*. "It is my heart's desire and prayer to God, saith he, that not one may go out from me without an understanding enlightened from above, a heart sanctified by divine grace, quickened and warmed with love to a well known Jesus, and tenderly concerned for the salvation of perishing souls. What are all our studies, labours and pursuits to this?" For this purpose he endeavoured to bring them early into commu-

* See his Theological Lectures, Introd. ad fin.

nion with the church under his care, if they had not been admitted elsewhere; that they might renew their baptismal engagements, and publicly avow their resolution to be the Lord's. He took pains to prepare them for an intelligent devout approach to the Lord's-supper, and often reminded them of their consequent privileges and engagements.——In order to preserve and increase vital religion in their hearts, all common lectures were omitted on the Saturday, preceding the Lord's-day on which the sacrament was administered; and the greatest part of that day was spent in devotional exercises. All the pupils assembled in the lecture-room, he prayed with them, and then delivered a devotional lecture, or a discourse particularly suited to their circumstances; concerning the nature, duties, difficulties, encouragements or rewards of the ministry, the nature of christian communion, their obligations to diligence, prayer, watchfulness, brotherly love; or such other topics as were most proper for such an assembly. His discourse on "the evil and danger of neglecting the souls of men," was delivered on one of these occasions. After this lecture was finished, and singing, he concluded with prayer. Never did his heart appear more strongly affected, and devoutly raised, than at these seasons. He considered of how much importance to the present and eternal interest of thousands, the temper and behaviour of so many young men, intended for the ministry, was. His heart overflowed with benevolence, and he appeared like an affectionate father addressing his children, and commending them and their concerns to the favour of heaven. Many of his pupils have acknowledged, that they reaped more advantage by these lectures, than all the other methods used to promote their improvement. The latter part of the day was spent by the pupils themselves in religious exercises, agreeable to a plan which they had laid down, with their tutor's approbation and encouragement.——The Lord's-day was most strictly and religiously observed in his family: And after the public and domestic services of it, he often took them separately into his study; conversed with them concerning the state of religion in their souls, and gave them suitable advice.

He endeavoured to behave to them in such a manner, as to gain their affections and engage them to open their hearts to him without reserve. He often reminded them, how much his own comfort and happiness depended upon their good behaviour, diligence in their studies, and improvements in knowledge and piety. When, in the year 1736, the two Colleges of the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, had concurred in conferring

upon him the degree of Doctor in Divinity, his pupils thought it a proper piece of respect to congratulate him in a body upon the occasion. He thanked them for their compliment, and told them, that " their learning, piety and zeal would be more his honour and give him ten thousand times more pleasure, than his degree, or any other token of public esteem."——He heard their discourses and prayers with great candour, passed over little imperfections, which he thought growing years and experience would rectify, and encouraged them by commending what was good and pertinent. When he thought it his duty to hint to them their defects, he did it privately, and in the most soft and friendly manner. None but a pious benevolent mind can conceive the pleasure it gave him, to hear some of the first sermons of his pupils, who set out with good qualifications and right views. Concerning one of them he thus writes, in some private memorandums he kept of the state of his own soul; ' This day Mr. ——— preached one of the best sermons I ever heard, concerning the happiness of the children of God. I had preached one on the subject some time before; but when I considered how much superior his was to mine, it shamed and humbled me, yet, I bless God, it did not grieve me. If any stirrings of envy moved, they were immediately suppressed; and, as soon as I came home, I solemnly returned my acknowledgments to God, for having raised up such a minister to his church, and honoured me with his education. I recommended him to the divine blessing with the tenderest affection; leaving myself in the hand of God; acquiescing in the thought of being eclipsed, of being neglected, if he shall so appoint; at the same time adoring him, that, with capacities inferior to a multitude of others, I have been providentially led into services superior to many of those, in comparison with whom, my knowledge and learning is but that of a child."——He was tenderly careful of his pupils, when they were sick; and when some of them, who seemed qualifying for eminent usefulness, died, he felt for them and wept over them, as a father for his child: He endeavoured, from such events, to excite superior diligence and piety in their surviving brethren, and wrote many excellent letters of advice and consolation to the mourning parents and friends of the deceased.

After this account of his behaviour to his pupils, and concern for their usefulness and happiness, the reader, who knows any thing of human nature and the attractive influence of love, will not wonder to be told, that they, in general, reverenced and loved him as a father; and that his paternal advices and en-

treaties weighed more with them, than the commands of rigid authority, or the arguments of a cooler mind, where the affection of the heart was not felt, or not tenderly expressed. They were most of them his honour and joy. His principal defect in this capacity was, that he had not sufficient resolution of temper to govern some untractable youths, who would not be won upon by mild and gentle addresses: And he was sometimes deceived by the appearance of humiliation and penitence, and fair promises of a more orderly behaviour. The natural softness and gentleness of his temper made it painful to censure and reprove: Upon every important occasion indeed, he resolutely submitted to this disagreeable task, and performed it in a manner most likely to be effectual; yet in lesser instances, where he thought the character and improvement of his pupils not so much concerned, he was, perhaps, too easy in admitting excuses, and not strict enough in exacting an observance of his established laws. This, as we shall hereafter observe, he perceived and acknowledged to be an error.——He found it a great inconvenience, and the source of some disorders in his family, to have young gentlemen of great fortunes, intended for no particular profession, and young men intended for the ministry, as students together.

It was difficult to establish general laws, which would not bear hard upon one or the other. Some of those who had large allowances from their parents or guardians, were sometimes a snare to the other students, especially the divinity students, whose allowance was generally small; though it is but justice to add, that many of the former behaved in the most unexceptionable manner. He often expressed his wish, that different places of education could be provided for persons intended for the ministry and those for other professions; as he thought it would be a better security for the religious character of the former; and some indulgences might be allowed to the others, especially those of rank and fortune, that were not proper for divinity students, as few of them were likely ever to be in affluent circumstances. But whatever their rank and circumstances were, he treated them with equal regard; they were alike subject to the discipline and religious orders of his family.——When any of his pupils, who have behaved well, left his academy, he parted with them with great regret, and by fervent prayer, commended them, in their future concerns and connections, to the blessing of God. It was usual, when some of them entered on the ministry together, and also when they were removing to their respective stations, to have some time spent in public prayer, to recommend them to the grace of God, and en-

gage his blessing on their studies and labours. The elders of his church, together with himself and his assistant, conducted these religious exercises; and sometimes he had the concurrence of his brethren in the neighbourhood. He interested himself in their comfortable settlements, corresponded with many of them, and was ready to advise any of them in cases of difficulty, in which they desired his assistance. He employed his interest with his friends for their benefit, and was glad to serve them in their temporal, spiritual or ministerial concerns. When they had an opportunity of visiting him at Northampton, his house and his heart were always open for their receptoin: He desired them to consider it as a father's house, and he treated them there, as a good father would a beloved child, who came from a distance to visit him. He had the pleasure to see many of them unanimously and affectionately chosen by large congregations as their pastors; amongst whom they laboured with great acceptance and success. Since his decease, three of them have been chosen to preside over seminaries of this kind, and are widely diffusing the benefits they received from his instructions and example.

So great was his reputation as a tutor, that the number of his pupils was large; *communibus annis*, thirty four, and generally increasing. He had sustained this office about twenty two years, and during that time had about two hundred young men under his care; of whom, one hundred and twenty, as far as I can learn, entered upon the ministry, and several intended for it died, while under his instructions. He had several pupils from Scotland and Holland. One person, that was intended for the ministry in the church of England, chose to spend a year or two under his instructions, before he went to the university; others, whose parents were of that church, were placed in his family, and they were readily admitted as pupils and allowed to attend the established worship; for the constitution of his academy was perfectly catholic. Some young divines from Scotland, who had studied and taken the usual degrees, in the universities there, and had begun to preach, came to attend his divinity lectures, and receive his instructions, before they settled with parishes in their native country. During their residence with him, they preached occasionally in the dissenting congregations in that town and neighbourhood, and two of them were ordained there.

When he had published some hints of his method of education, in his short memoirs of Mr. Steffe's life, he received letters from some eminent divines of the church of England, expressing

their high approbation of his plan, as affording students, intended for the ministry, superior advantages for appearing with honour in the ministerial character, than were enjoyed in some more public seminaries.

Before I conclude this chapter, it may be proper to observe that the account here given of the Doctor's lectures and plan of education is taken from what they were between twenty and thirty years ago. He might, in some circumstances, change his method afterwards; but I believe in no material point. I mention this, lest any, who have been under his care since that period, should perceive that my account does not exactly correspond with their knowledge of his academy, while they belonged to it.

Thus have I endeavoured to give some idea of the manner in which this excellent person filled up this difficult and honourable station; and I am persuaded the pious reader will, from this survey, be inclined to join with me in acknowledging the wisdom and goodness of providence, which gradually prepared him for, and, by the several steps already pointed out, led him into, so large a sphere of usefulness. May the same divine hand, that so richly endowed him with those gifts, which qualified him for this important service, raise up, through every succeeding period of the church, others, who may discover a like spirit; and who may be honoured as the instruments of forming the minds of their younger brethren, and, by this means, of transmitting the knowledge and power of religion through the most distant ages!

CHAP. VII.

Dr. Doddridge's Genius, Learning and Writings.

THOUGH I am chiefly solicitous, in this work, to represent Dr. Doddridge under the character of a christian and a minister, as an example worthy the imitation of others; yet I cannot, without great injustice, pass over in silence his character as a man of genius and a scholar*. Nor will this view of him be foreign

* I do not know that genius can be ascribed to Dr. Doddridge, taking that word in its highest signification, as implying either a great inventive faculty in science, or that boldness of imagination which is productive of original imagery and combinations.

to my main design; as it will tend, in the opinion of many, to set his other qualities in a more striking light; and will prove, if indeed it needs any proof, that very high attainments in piety and devotion are no way inconsistent with great eminency in learning and knowledge.

The Doctor was possessed, in a very high degree, of two qualities, which are rarely united, *viz.* a natural activity and ardour of mind, joined to invincible resolution and perseverance. The one led him to form an acquaintance with the various branches of science; while the other secured him from the evils attending a boundless curiosity, and kept him steady to those pursuits, which he thought deserved his principal attention. His uncommon application, even with moderate abilities, would have enabled him to lay up a large stock of knowledge: It is no wonder therefore, that, when it was joined with great natural quickness of apprehension and strength of memory, it should enable him to make distinguished advances in the several parts of useful learning.——His acquaintance with books was very extensive. There were few of any importance on the general subjects of literature, which he had not read with attention; and he could both retain and easily recollect, what was most remarkable in them. As he cautioned his pupils against that indolent and superficial way of reading, which many students fall into, so he took care that his own example should enforce his precepts. His usual method was, to read with a pen in his hand, and to mark in the margin particular passages, which struck him. Besides which he often took down hints of what was most important, or made references to them in a blank leaf of the book, adding his own reflections on the author's sentiments. Thus he could easily turn to particular passages, and enriched his lectures with references to what was most curious and valuable in the course of his reading.——But he was not one of those who content themselves with treasuring up other men's thoughts. He knew, and often reminded his pupils, that the true end of reading is only to furnish the mind with materials to exercise its own powers; and few men knew better, how to make use of the knowledge they had gained, and apply it to the most valuable purposes. His mind was indeed

In a lower and more popular sense of the term, he might be said to have been a man of genius; for he had a quick conception and lively fancy. He had a comprehension of mind, that enabled him to proceed with celerity and vigour in the acquisition of knowledge and that activity of his mental frame, which put it into his power to learn much in a little time, was happily accompanied with an invincible resolution and perseverance in the prosecution of his studies.—K.

a rich treasury, out of which he could, on every proper occasion, produce a variety of the most important instruction. This qualified him for lecturing to his pupils in those several branches of science, of which his course consisted; it enriched his public writings, and rendered his private conversation highly instructive and entertaining.

In the younger part of life he took pains to cultivate a taste for polite literature, which produced a remarkable ease and elegance in his letters; and the marks of it appear in all his writings*. And, considering the natural warmth of his imagination, which must have rendered these kind of studies peculiarly pleasing to him, it was a great instance of his resolution and self-denial, that he did not suffer them to ingross a disproportionate share of his time and attention, but made them subservient to the more serious and important ends he had in view.—With regard to the learned languages, though he could not be called a profound linguist, he was sufficiently acquainted with them to read the most valuable pieces of antiquity with taste and pleasure†, and to enter into the spirit of the sacred writings. Of this, the world has had a proof in his Paraphrase and Notes on the New Testament, in which he has often illustrated the force and beauty of the original with great judgment and in the true spirit of criticism. He had also nearly completed a New Translation of the Minor Prophets, in which he has shewn his critical knowledge of the Hebrew language.—Though he seemed formed by nature for cultivating the more polite, rather than the abstruser parts of science, yet he was no stranger to mathematical and philosophical studies. He thought it inconsistent with his principal business to devote any considerable part of his time to them; yet it appeared from some essays, which he drew up for the use of his pupils ‡, that he could

* Mr. Doddridge in younger life, afforded various proofs of a poetical turn, most of which are in the possession of the present biographer.—K.

† Dr. Doddridge was well acquainted with the greek philosophers and orators, among the last of whom he was particularly devoted to Demosthenes. To the poets of grace he was far from being a stranger; but he was not, I think, deeply conversant with its tragedians. I remember, while I resided with him, his having read Pindar with much admiration. With the latin classics he was largely acquainted. As became a divine and a theological tutor, he diligently studied the ancient fathers, especially of the three first centuries. He paid particular regard to the apologists for christianity, and was a great master of Origen and Eusebius. Beyond the fourth century his knowledge of this species of literature did not, I believe, widely extend, though it did not wholly stop there.—K.

‡ In this number was a Treatise of Algebra, in which the rules both of numeral and universal arithmetic were demonstrated with great conciseness and clearness.

easily have pursued these researches to a much greater length.—He was well acquainted with ancient history, both civil and ecclesiastical; but he did not content himself with storing-up a number of facts in his memory, but made such observations and reflections upon them, as tended either to increase his acquaintance with human nature, to exemplify the interpositions of providence, or to explain and illustrate the sacred history.

But his favourite study, and that in which his chief excellency lay, was divinity, as taken in its largest sense. Whatever could tend to strengthen the evidences of natural or revealed religion, to assist our conceptions of the divine nature, or enable us more perfectly to understand the discoveries, which revelation has made, he thought deserved the most serious and attentive regard. Though he made himself familiarly acquainted with what others had written upon these subjects, he was not guided implicitly by their authority; but thought for himself, with that freedom, which became a philosopher and a christian. There were perhaps few men, who had more carefully studied the different systems of divinity, and could point out, with more judgment and accuracy, the defects of each. This appears from his lectures, published since his death; a work, which is, of itself, a sufficient proof of the extent of his learning and the soundness of his judgment, and of which some account has been already given. He was not one of those, who affect to treat the labours of wise and learned men, who have gone before them, with contempt, but was always ready to receive whatever light they could afford him; yet in forming his opinion on all matters of mere revelation, he took the scriptures for his guide, and, without any regard to human systems, endeavoured to find out the several truths they contained. As he was no slave to the authority of others, so he did not affect to distinguish himself by any of those peculiarities of opinion, which learned men are often fond of, and which in most instances are rather ingenious than solid. He chose to represent the doctrines of the New Testament in the same simplicity, in which he found them expressed by the sacred writers themselves: And of this the reader may judge for himself by his writings, already referred to.—There was no subject, which he had laboured with more care, and in which he was a greater master, than in the evidences of revelation. The view he has given of them in his lectures, is perhaps, the most complete and methodical of any extant. He had read with attention the most celebrated pieces on the side of infidelity, and has comprised in this work, a concise view of their principal arguments, with the proper answers to them.

As he had himself the fullest conviction, upon the most mature and impartial examination, of the truth of the gospel, and the weakness of all the attempts, which its adversaries have made to subvert it; so, he could represent his own views in so forcible a light, as was calculated to produce the same conviction in the minds of others.

Upon the whole; it may, I think, with great justice be said of Dr. Doddridge, that, though others might exceed him in their acquaintance with antiquity or their skill in the languages, yet in the extent of his learning, and the variety of useful and important knowledge he had acquired, he was surpassed by few.

As he had taken so much pains to furnish and adorn his own mind with the most valuable knowledge, he was no less happy in his talent of communicating it to others. He was remarkable for his command of language, and could express himself with ease and propriety on every occasion.* In his younger years he studied the English language with great care, and had formed his style upon the best models. It was remarkably polite and copious, though perhaps, in his later writings, rather too diffuse. He excelled in the warm and pathetic; and there are in his practical works, many instances of true oratory, and the most animated moving address. He was well acquainted with all the graces of elegant composition: but he willingly sacrificed a part of that reputation he might have gained as a fine writer, to the more valuable consideration of promoting the interests of piety and virtue; and often studiously avoided those ornaments of style, which, though easy and natural to him, would have rendered his works less useful to plainer christians. As his own ideas on every subject he had studied, were clear and distinct, so his method of ranging his thoughts, when he had occasion to express them in writing, was remarkably just and natural. Perhaps we have few discourses in our language, where the divisions are made with greater accuracy, and the thoughts more strictly proper to the subject, than those which he delivered in his usual course of preaching.

Such then were the intellectual endowments with which he was honoured, and the valuable acquisitions he had made. They justly entitled him to a considerable rank in the learned

* He used to descant, in his lectures on the subjects treated of, with surprising perspicuity and freedom; and the same perspicuity and freedom attended him when he took the pen in hand. This was owing to the orderly disposition in which things lay in his mind.—K.

world; but, great as they were, it may with the strictest truth be said, that he valued them chiefly, as they made him more capable of serving the interest of religion, and contributing to the happiness of mankind; to which great ends he had consecrated all his time and all his talents. He considered himself as a minister of Christ, and therefore thought it to be his principal business to save souls. But he had scope for exerting all his abilities in his office as a tutor, and opening to his pupils his ample stores of literature. By enriching them, he was enriching thousands in different parts of the kingdom, and making his learning more extensively useful, than it probably would have been, had he published ingenious and learned treatises, on speculative or not very interesting subjects.

We are now to consider him as an author; in which character he is in much reputation among many of the friends of virtue and religion of various persuasions, in these nations, in our colonies and upon the continent. He was not fond of controversy; and was determined, if he could possibly avoid it, never to engage in any of those disputes, which have been, and still are, agitated among protestants. He had often seen and lamented this, as the event of many a voluminous controversy, that "Men of contrary parties sat down more attached to their own opinions, than they were at the beginning, and much more estranged in their affections." He therefore left this work to others.

The first piece he published (except some papers on the present state of the republic of letters) can scarcely be called controversial, though it was an answer to another. This was entitled, "Free Thoughts on the most probable Means of Reviving the Dissenting Interest, occasioned by the late Enquiry into the Causes of its Decay; addressed to the author of that Enquiry," 1730.* He treats the author with great civility, and, instead of criticising upon his performance, offers some remarks which may be of general use: And they deserve the regard of all ministers. He points out the principal reasons, why many learned and good men are so unpopular and unsuccessful; and hath shewn great knowledge of human nature, and what careful observations he had made on the dispositions of mankind. This tract is little known, especially by our

* The writer of the enquiry was for a time supposed to be some lay gentleman; but, in fact, it came from the pen of a young dissenting minister, of the name of Gough, who afterwards conformed to the church; and who, in 1750, published a volume of sermons, which have considerable merit, as judicious and elegant compositions.

brethren of the established church; but at its first publication, it met with a favourable reception among persons of different parties and sentiments; and it deserves to be read, as a model of a candid, polite manner of remarking upon another author's writings and opinions.

The only proper controversy that he was ever engaged in, was with the author of a treatise, entitled, "Christianity not founded on Argument, &c." published in the year 1742, to whom he wrote Three Letters, which were published soon after one another in 1743. The author of this treatise, under the form of a most orthodox and zealous christian, pretends to cry up the immediate testimony of the spirit, and asserts its absolute necessity in order to the belief of the gospel; while at the same time he endeavours to expose all kind of rational evidence by which it could be supported, and advances several very cunning insinuations against the truth of it in the most pernicious view. Dr. Doddridge therefore chose to publish some remarks upon it; not only to defend christianity in general, but to explain and support some important truths of it, particularly the agency of the divine spirit, which some had denied, because others had misrepresented. He thought this treatise affected the foundations of natural as well as revealed religion; and that the ludicrous turns given to scripture in it, and the air of burlesque and irony, which runs through it, were very unbecoming a wise and benevolent man, or the infinite moment of the question in debate. But, while he thought himself called by providence to "plead the cause of the gospel, in the name of the God of truth, he was careful to do it in a manner worthy of him, and which might not offend him, as the God of love." He therefore addresses the author with the greatest calmness, seriousness and compassion; endeavouring to awaken his conscience, while he confuted his arguments. These answers met with much acceptance in the world, and he had letters of thanks for them from some persons of distinguished rank and abilities. The third part was esteemed by many judicious persons, the best illustration, and the most rational, full defence of the spirit's influences upon the human heart, which had been published.

In 1747, he published, "some remarkable passages in the life of Colonel James Gardiner, who was slain by the rebels at the battle of Preston-Pans, Sept. 21, 1745." He designed by this work, "not merely to perform a tribute of gratitude to the memory of an invaluable friend, but of duty to God and his fellow creatures; as he had a chearful hope that the narrative would, under a divine blessing, be the means of spread-

ing a warm and lively sense of religion. He thought the Colonel's character would command some peculiar regard, as it shone amidst the many temptations of a military life." This piece has gone through several editions; and the author had the pleasure to hear of some instances, in which it had answered his desires and hopes; though many thought, and perhaps justly, that he too much indulged the emotions of private friendship and affection in the composition*.

* Two pamphlets were published, one at London, the other at Edinburgh, containing remarks on this performance. The first, which bears the name of John Kennedy, is too trifling to deserve further notice. The second is a very short one. The writer's principal design is to charge our author with great want of candour and integrity; and the passage to which he thinks that charge applicable is this, § 111. "The most plausible objection, that I ever heard to Col. Gardiner's character, is, that he was too much attached to some religious principles, established indeed in the churches both of England and Scotland; but which have, of late years, been much disputed, and from which, it is at least generally supposed, that not a few in both have thought proper to depart; whatever expedient they may have found to quiet their consciences in subscribing those formularies, in which they are plainly taught. His zeal was especially apparent in opposition to those doctrines, which seemed to derogate from the divine honours of the Son and Spirit of God, and from the freedom of divine grace, or the reality and necessity of its operations in the conversion and salvation of sinners." By "being too much attached to some religious principles, &c." it appears, from what he adds afterwards, and by what I have heard him intimate, that he only meant, that the Colonel expressed himself with too much displeasure against some ministers, who denied these principles; especially such as had most solemnly professed to believe, and engaged to teach them; and he might, in the warmth of his zeal, drop some words, which might be injurious to them on this account. But the passage which this writer most highly resents is what follows, concerning some ministers departing from these principles. He calls this "a murdering stroke; a murdering stroke indeed, if the traducing of them as arrant knaves may be reckoned so; representing them as a set of men, who subscribe that they believe doctrines, from which they have thought proper to depart, to be agreeable to the word of God and founded thereupon, (for in those terms does the subscription of the ministers of the church of Scotland run) and then are employed in finding out expedients (which you cannot so much as guess at) to quiet their consciences in so doing." He represents this, as an insinuation, as grossly false as it is maliciously and artfully thrown out. He denies this to be the case in the church of Scotland, with the clergy of which, he saith, he hath a pretty general acquaintance; and asserts, that "there is a regular and strict discipline in that church, which would soon pass a sentence of deprivation on any one, who should by overt-acts, or declarations in words, shew, that he was departed from any of their established principles." It is sufficient to say, in answer to this charge, that our author grounded his supposition on what the Colonel himself had informed him from his own observation, of the artful manner in which tenets, contradicting the established formularies, had been maintained and insinuated by some ministers of that church, § 112; on what he had heard from other persons of judgment and integrity, who were either ministers in Scotland, or had spent some time at the Universities there; and on what he had personally known of and heard from, some divines of that communion. And indeed this writer allows it to be a supposition made by some among themselves. That it has been and is

These were all the writings our author published, except his practical ones. "He esteemed an endeavour to set a man right in religious opinions, which we apprehend to be important, the second office of christian friendship, and that of attempting to reform his morals undoubtedly the first." And he attempted the second in this public manner no further, than he thought it necessary to secure the former. He gives this weighty reason why he published so many things on practical subjects, which had been handled by various writers; "Because I know the gospel to be true, and, through divine grace, feel in my heart an ardent concern for the salvation of men's souls. As in this view, other cares appear trifling, so the limits of one congregation or country, and the little time which I must spend in life, seem too narrow. I would speak, if possible, to the ends of the earth, and the end of time. I esteem it my great felicity to be engaged with other worthy authors, in assisting men's minds to a scriptural religion and a christian temper: And though many provinces may appear much more splendid in the eyes of the learned and polite world, I trust ours will be at least as favourably remembered in *the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming:* And I would have no standard of honour, wisdom and happiness, which will not stand the test of that important day*."

The first practical piece he published was "Sermons on the Education of Children, 1732." This he intended principally for the use of his own congregation, to supply, in some measure, that want of more frequent personal instructions on the subject, which his care of his pupils necessarily occasioned.

the case with many divines of the church of England, their writings evidently shew. To which I may add, that some writers of both communions fix the charge upon some of their brethren, and blame their dissimulation and hypocrisy for such a departure; though the reader will allow that our author speaks very tenderly of them for it. He greatly lamented those unhappy terms of admission into the ministry in both churches, which exposed men to the danger of prevarication and falsehood, or led them to such quieting expedients, as he could not but fear sat uneasy on their consciences. He thought these were "Fetters, under the weight and straitness of which, however they may be gilded over, the worthiest persons that wear them must secretly groan." The candid reader will see, from these few remarks on this letter, why our author chose to take no public notice of it. The affair was too delicate to have been canvassed in print; especially as the characters of some persons might be concerned, for whom he had a great esteem. To which may be added, that some of his friends in Scotland, and some too, who did not quite approve the passage objected to, advised him to take no notice of this piece; as it had met with the general contempt there, which it deserved on account of its virulency.

* Ten Sermons. Pref.

These discourses contain a variety of important advices and affecting motives in a little compass, and have been very useful to assist parents in this difficult work.

His tender concern for the rising generation shewed itself in his "Sermons to Young People, published in 1735," and in his "Principles of the Christian Religion, in verse for the use of Children and Youth, published in 1743." In this composition, which was drawn up by the desire of his friend Dr. Clark, he hath happily united ease, plainness and elegance*. And here I may also mention his prefixing a recommendatory preface to a small piece entitled, "Familiar Dialogues for Children," which is well adapted to instruct them in their duty to God and man, and preserve them from the vices and follies of childhood and youth, at the same time it agreeably entertains and amuses them.

In 1736, he published "Ten Sermons on the Power and Grace of Christ, and the Evidences of his Glorious Gospel." The three last, on the evidences of the gospel, were, in some later editions, by the particular desire of one of the first dignitaries of the church of England, printed so as to be had separate from the former. They contain a sufficient defence of christianity, and are well adapted to the use of those, whose office calls them to defend it. It gave the author singular pleasure to know, that these sermons were the means of convincing two gentlemen of a liberal education and distinguished abilities, who had been deists, that christianity was true and divine: And one of them, who had set himself zealously to prejudice others against the evidences and contents of the gospel, became a zealous preacher and an ornament of the religion he had once denied and despised.

In 1741, the Doctor published some "Practical Discourses on Regeneration." He was "very sensible of the importance of the subject at all times; and knowing that several controversies had, about that time, been raised concerning it, he chose to treat it more largely than he had done before; lest these controversies should have been the means of unsettling men's minds, and have led them into some particular errors, and into a general apprehension, that it was a mere point of speculation, about which it was not necessary to form any judgment at all." These lectures, being preached on Lord's-day evenings, were attended with uncommon diligence, by many persons of different persuasions; and God was pleased to make them the means of

* There is some reason to believe that they were made use of in the education of the royal children.—K.

producing and advancing, in some who heard them, the change which they described; and since their publication, they have been useful to the same purpose*.

In 1745, he published another practical treatise entitled, "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," illustrated in a course of serious and practical addresses, suited to every character and circumstance, with a devout meditation or prayer added to each chapter. Dr. Watts had projected such a work himself; but his growing infirmities prevented his execution of it. He recommended it therefore to Dr. Doddridge, imagining him the fittest person of his acquaintance to execute it in a manner, that would be acceptable and useful to the world. It was with some reluctance, he undertook such a work, amidst his many other weighty concerns. But Dr. Watts's heart was so much set upon the design, and he urged his undertaking it with so much importunity, that he could not deny his request; after having been honoured with his friendship for many years and receiving much assistance and encouragement from him in several of his undertakings for the good of the church.

After this work was finished, Dr. Watts revised as much of it, as his health would admit. It is indeed a body of practical divinity and christian experience; and contains, as it were, the substance of all the author's preaching: and, considering how comprehensive it is, there is hardly any single treatise, which may be more serviceable to young ministers and students, if they

* The following is a translation of part of a letter, sent by Mr. William Pieffers, one of the ministers of Amsterdam, to the printer of the Dutch translation of this work. "Herewith I gratefully return you the work of Dr. Doddridge, concerning the new Birth, Salvation by Grace, &c. which I have read more than once with such uncommon pleasure, that I long to see all that excellent author hath published. I did not know him before so much as by name; but from this incomparable masterpiece, in which the oratory of the ancients seems to be revived, he appears to be a very great man. Here orthodoxy reigns joined with moderation, zeal with meekness, deep hidden wisdom with uncommon clearness: Here simplicity shines without coldness, elegance without painting, and sublimity without bombast. Here one is equally charmed with reason without pelagianism, and heavenly mindedness without enthusiasm. One sees here, in a most lively manner, what is meant by *teaching the truth in love*, and what that wisdom produceth, which *is from above*, &c. I wish from my heart, that this book was used in all families and read by every one, of whatsoever party or persuasion. For I am not only assured, that every one, who has not lost all manner of taste, will find great satisfaction from it, but do not doubt, through the divine blessing, it would be of very general and great service. I think deists and even atheists themselves, by such a manner of preaching and writing, must be struck with awe and reverence for the christian religion. Happy land, where such lights of the world shine, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation!"

would make it familiar to their minds and form their discourses upon this model. This book was received with much esteem, by several persons of great eminence for rank, learning and piety, both clergy and laity, in the established church; and who, in a very respectful manner, returned the author their thanks for this attempt to revive religion. A person of distinguished learning and goodness always carried it with him, declaring, that it was every thing on the subject of serious and practical religion. The many editions it has gone through in a few years with the author's consent, not to mention a pirated edition or two, and its having been reprinted in America and Scotland, shew how well it has been received in the world. The author was favoured with many letters from different parts of these kingdoms, America and Holland, giving him an account how useful it had been for the conversion, edification and comfort of many persons; and perhaps there is no practical book better calculated for general usefulness*.

Besides these, he published two sermons on Salvation

* Dr. Ayscough, formerly preceptor to the children of Frederic Prince of Wales, speaking of it, says, "I presented your last book to her Royal Highness, and ought long ago to have acquainted you with her most gracious acceptance of it, and that I was commanded to return you her thanks for it. There is indeed such a spirit of piety in it, as deserves the thanks of every good christian. Pray God grant it may have its proper effect in awakening this present careless age, and then I am sure you will have your end in publishing it." Dr. Thomas Hunt, at that time of Hertford College, but afterwards Canon of Christ Church, and Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Oxford, thus expressed himself concerning the same work: "With our thanks for the favour of your good company, be pleased to accept of our most hearty acknowledgments for your kind present of your excellent piece on the Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul. A performance which cannot fail of doing much good in the world, as it is judiciously contrived to engage the attention, and improve the minds of all sorts of readers; being so plain as to be intelligible to the lowest understanding, at the same time, that it is so elegant, as to gratify the highest. You may assure yourself, Sir, that it was not in the power of my most pressing engagements to hinder me from reading such a work as this, and I hope I am much the better for having done so. Nor would it have been kind to my dear Mrs. Hunt, not to have given her an opportunity of perusing a book, from which I myself had received so much benefit. I therefore no sooner laid it out of my own hands, but I put it into hers, where I afterwards oftentimes found it, and cannot easily tell you how much she was affected by it, nor describe the gratitude she professes to owe to her worthy instructor." The Duchess of Somerset was equally pleased with the work. In a letter written to Dr. Doddridge, in 1750, she says, "I had not the pleasure of being acquainted with any of your writings till I was at Bath, three years ago, with my poor Lord, when an old acquaintance of mine, the Dowager Lady Hyndford, recommended me, to read the Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul: and I may with truth assure you, that I never was so deeply affected with any thing I ever met with as with that book; and I could not be easy till I had given one to every servant in my house, who appeared to be of a serious turn of mind."—K.

by Grace, several single sermons; some on particular occasions, and charges, delivered at the ordination of some of his brethren. There were circumstances relating to each, that led him to believe they might be useful to the public; especially to those who desired the publication, or to whom they were first addressed. He thought, that, "as we are so near the eternal state and must so soon be silent in the dust, nothing should be neglected, which looked like a call of providence, directing any opportunity of doing good; though some might think, that such publications were an addition to the number of unnecessary books, with which the world was before encumbered."—His "Plain and Serious Address to the Master of a Family, on the Important Subject of Family Religion" deserves particular notice; as it hath passed through several editions, been very serviceable to ministers, who by putting it into the hands of masters of prayerless families, might excite them to their duty, without being exposed to those inconveniences, with which a personal admonition might, in some cases and with some tempers, be attended; and as the author's reasoning is so plain and forcible, as to leave those inexcusable, who, after reading it, will continue in this shameful and pernicious neglect.—— Since his decease his lesser pieces have been reprinted in three small volumes.

But his capital work was "The Family Expositor, containtaining a Version and Paraphrase of the New Testament, with Critical Notes, and a Practical Improvement of each Section," in six volumes, quarto. He had been preparing for this work from his entrance on the ministry, and kept it in view in the future course of his studies. The large list of subscribers to the two first volumes, and the names of noble, honourable and learned persons, which stand in it, shew their esteem for the author and concern for the advancement of religion. It is natural to expect, that after an author's death, his friends might be less solicitous to encourage the remaining part of a work, than that which the author had published; and that others who had no connection with him, might neglect a posthumous work, which was not designed to help a needy family: Yet the three last volumes, printed since the author's decease, met with great encouragement; and in this view, the list of subscribers to them is a more honourable testimony to the merit of the work than the former was. It is in so many hands, and daily instructing and entertaining so many devout christians and their families,

that I need not enlarge on its excellency and usefulness, and the spirit of piety and love which breathes through the whole.*

* Happily he had finished the whole of the copy, in short hand, a few slight notes towards the conclusion excepted, and the larger part had been transcribed for the press. This was the case with all the fourth volume, the preface to which had been written by our author. In 1754, that volume was published, containing St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and his first and second Epistles to the Corinthians. The two remaining volumes, being the fifth and sixth, were published by Mr. Orton, in 1756. From the editor's advertisement, it appears, that Dr. Doddridge had himself transcribed for the press, the paraphrase, improvements and notes, of the fourth and fifth volumes, and the paraphrase and improvements of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the two first Epistles of St. John. The notes on these three Epistles, together with the paraphrase, improvements and notes, on the remaining Epistles, and the Revelation were carefully transcribed, either by Mr. Orton himself, or by some of the Doctor's pupils, and the transcription was compared several times with the short-hand copy. An accident, which, during the author's life, happened to part of the original manuscript, deserves to be recorded. In June, 1750, a fire broke out in his study, occasioned by a wax candle being left on his writing desk, and consumed many of his papers, and, in particular, part of one volume of the short-hand copy of the Family Expositor. The light of the fire being, however, providentially discovered by an opposite neighbour, who gave an immediate alarm, it was speedily extinguished. When the Doctor was informed of the accident, he seemed most anxious about the preservation of this manuscript; and when the flames were quenched, it appeared, to his great joy and surprise, that only that part of the volume which had been transcribed was destroyed; that the transcript lay in another place out of danger; and that all the untranscribed pages were perfectly legible, the edges of them only being singed. "Being an eye witness," says Mr. Orton, "of the danger and deliverance, I record this account of it, chiefly as it seems to denote a particular care of providence, in preserving this work, and a favourable omen, that God intends it for extensive and lasting usefulness." Those who may not carry their notions so far as Mr. Orton, will sympathise with Dr. Doddridge in the pleasure he received in having his manuscript preserved.

Of all our author's writings, the Family Expositor is the most important and valuable. It is the work in which he took the greatest pains, and on which his literary reputation principally depends. Many of his notes display a sagacious and judicious spirit of criticism, and the practical reflections are of general utility. How well this work has been received by the learned and pious world, is apparent from the continued demand for it down to the present time: nor is its popularity likely to decrease. It is the seventh edition which is now called for by the public; not to mention the separate impressions of it that have appeared in Scotland and Ireland. In passing a just encomium upon the Family Expositor, it will not be understood that there is any design of asserting, that it is a performance which is totally exempt from imperfections and errors. Such is not the character of the best human productions. Diversities of sentiment will occurr with regard to Dr. Doddridge's interpretations of particular passages, and his criticisms upon them. Perhaps likewise, in some instances, his paraphrases may be deemed rather too redundant. But no observations of this kind are inconsistent with allowing to the work, the praise of its contributing in a high degree to christian instruction and improvement. The proper inference to be drawn from any mistakes, into which the most successful elucidations of the scriptures have fallen, is not to depreciate their general merit, but to avoid placing an undue confidence on their authority. While we thankfully derive from them the assistance they are capable of affording us in our enquiries into the meaning of the sacred oracles, we should fully examine and impartially judge for ourselves.

Dr. Doddridge thought it would contribute to the usefulness of his Expositor, to digest the history of the four Evangelists into one continued series, or, in other

It has been already observed, that his works have been much read and esteemed in these kingdoms and our colonies. I would add, that the most considerable of them have been translated into foreign languages and published abroad. His sermons on Regeneration, Salvation by Grace, on the Power and Grace of Christ, and his Letter on Family Prayer have been translated into Dutch; the Memoirs of Colonel Gardiner, into the Dutch, French and German languages: The Rise and Progress of Religion into Dutch, German, Danish and French. It is observable, that the translation of it into French, was undertaken by the particular encouragement of the late Prince and Princess of Orange, and many of the gentry in Holland. A protestant prince of the empire wrote to the undertaker of it, promising to recommend it to those about him. Many persons of quality and rich citizens in Germany and Switzerland were subscribers to it. A pious minister in Wales, translated it into the Welsh language, that it might be read by those of his congregation, who did not understand English; and it would have been printed, could sufficient encouragement have been procured.—Some learned men undertook to translate the former volumes of the Family Expositor into German; but an opposition was made to its publication by one of the Lutheran clergy, from an apprehension that his interpretation of particular passages and his reflections upon them, might not agree with their established principles or

words, to throw it into the order of an harmony. If such an harmony could be effectually and decisively ascertained, each story and discourse would be exhibited with all its concurrent circumstances, as recorded by the sacred penmen; frequent repetitions would be prevented; and a multitude of seeming oppositions be so evidently reconciled, as to supersede many objections. These undoubtedly are desirable objects, and the attainment of them is worthy of being sought for. We are indebted to the exertions of those gentlemen who have laboured in this field of theological literature. Where they have not sufficiently succeeded in the main point, they have by their researches been enabled to throw a new and beautiful light on many passages of the evangelical historians. That there is no small difficulty in the general subject, is manifest from the various systems that have been formed upon it by the ablest scholars, and the most judicious critics.

One part of Dr. Doddridge's Family Expositor, which must have cost him uncommon pains, was his having every where interwoven the text with the paraphrase, and carefully distinguished the former from the latter, by the italic character. By this method, it is impossible to read the paraphrase without the text, and every one may immediately see, not only the particular clause to which any explication answers, but also what are the words of the original, and what merely the sense of the commentator. Nor was our author content with barely inserting the old translation, but gave an entire new version of the whole Testament, the merit and usefulness of which, will in many respects be acknowledged. This translation was extracted from the paraphrase, and published in 1765, in two volumes, 12mo. with some alterations and improvements, by the editor, together with an introduction, and a number of very short notes.—K.

form of church government. Therefore the persons concerned in the translation, first published his sermons on Regeneration in that language; and the moderation and candour expressed in them quieted the opposition, and the work was completed. These writings thus translated and published, have been well received abroad, particularly in Holland, Germany and Switzerland, and, it is hoped, have been the means of spreading a spirit of piety and charity in those parts of the world.

Since the author's death a volume of his hymns hath been published, and his Theological Lectures, of which some account was given above. He intended, had God spared his life, to have published a new translation of the Minor Prophets with a Commentary on them; a Sermon to Children, some Sacramental Meditations, and a Dissertation on the Jewish Proselytes, defending that opinion concerning them, which he mentions in some of his notes upon the Acts of the Apostles. In this last tract he had made considerable progress, but it is too imperfect to appear in the world.

Besides his works above mentioned, he published a short account of the life of Mr. Thomas Steffe, one of his pupils, prefixed to some of his sermons, which were printed by the earnest desire of the congregation where he was settled; and a dedication of an abridgment of Mr. David Brainerd's Journal of his Mission among the Indians of New Jersey and Pensylvania, to the honourable society for promoting christian knowledge in the Highlands of Scotland, and in popish and infidel parts of the world; by which society Mr. Brainerd was employed in this work, and of which society, our author was one of the corresponding members. He also published a small piece of Mr. Some's concerning Inoculation for the Small Pox, which was written and published principally with a view to remove the common objection from a religious scruple.

In 1748, he revised the Expository Works and other remains of Archbishop Leighton, and translated his Latin Prelections; which were printed together in two volumes at Edinburgh. The preparing these volumes for the press took up some of his time for several months, in the intervals of other business. But he was far from repenting his labour. The delight and edification, which he found in the writings of this wonderful man, whom he calls an adept in true christianity, he esteemed a full equivalent for his pains; separate from all the prospect of that effect, which they might have upon others. He acknowledges in his preface, that he never spent a quarter of an hour in reviewing any of them, but, amidst the interruption which a critical ex-

amination of the copy would naturally give, he felt some impressions, which he wished always to retain. He found in them such heart-affecting lessons of simplicity and humility, candour and benevolence, exalted piety without the least tincture of enthusiasm, and an entire mortification to every earthly interest without any mixture of splenetic resentment, as he thought could hardly be found any where else, but in the sacred oracles. He had a chearful hope, that God would make these pieces the means of promoting the interest of true christianity, and also that spirit of catholicism, for which the Archbishop was so remarkable, and extending it among various denominations of christians in the northern and southern parts of our Island. In this view he says, "If the sincerest language or actions can express the disposition of the heart, it will here be apparent, that a diversity of judgment with regard to episcopacy and several forms both of discipline and worship connected with it, have produced in my mind no alienation, no indifference towards Archbishop Leighton, nor prevented my delighting in his works and profiting by them. In this respect I trust my brethren in Scotland will, for their own sakes and that of religion in general, shew the like candour. On the other side, as I have observed, with great pleasure and thankfulness, how much many of the established clergy in this part of Britain, are advancing with moderation towards their dissenting brethren, I am fully assured they will not like these excellent pieces the worse, for having passed through my hands*."

In confirmation of what I have said, in this chapter, of Dr. Doddridge's literary character, I shall here subjoin a letter from Dr. Watts to Mr. David Longueville, minister of the English church at Amsterdam. Such an honourable testimony to Dr. Doddridge's merit, from so distinguished a person as Dr. Watts, especially as written without his knowledge, may very properly have a place in this work.——"Rev. Sir, It is a very agreeable employment, to which you call me, and a very sensible honour you put upon me, when you desire me to give you my sentiments of that reverend and learned writer Dr. Doddridge, to be prefixed to a translation of any of his works into the Dutch tongue. I have well known him many years, and

* Dr. Henry Miles, of Tooting, speaking of Archbishop Leighton's works, said in a letter to Dr. Doddridge, "I bless God I ever met with them. There is a spirit in them I never met in any human writings, nor can I read many lines in them without being affected; though you know all his works are imperfect and inaccurate." Scotland, in the middle of the last century, produced some divines who had imbibed in a wonderful manner, the genuine spirit of devotion, and the genuine spirit of christianity.

have enjoyed a constant intimacy and friendship with him, ever since the providence of God called him to be a professor of human sciences, and a teacher of sacred theology to young men amongst us, who are trained up for the ministry of the gospel. I have no need to give you a large account of his knowledge in the sciences, in which I confess him to be greatly my superior; and as to the doctrines of divinity and the gospel of Christ, I know not any man of greater skill than himself and hardly sufficient to be his second. As he hath a most exact acquaintance with the things of God and our holy religion, so far as we are let into the knowledge of them by the light of nature and the revelations of scripture, so he hath a most happy manner of teaching those who are younger. He hath a most skilful and condescending way of instruction; nor is there any person of my acquaintance, with whom I am more entirely agreed in all the sentiments of the doctrine of Christ. He is a most hearty believer of the great articles and important principles of the reformed church; a most affectionate preacher, and pathetic writer on the practical parts of religion; and in one word, since I am now advanced in age, beyond my seventieth year, if there were any man, to whom providence would permit me to commit a second part of my life and usefulness in the church of Christ, Dr. Doddridge should be the man. If you have read that excellent performance of his, the Rise and Progress, &c. you will be of my mind; his dedication to me is the only thing in that book, I could hardly permit myself to approve. Besides all this, he possesseth such a spirit of charity, love and goodness towards his fellow-christians, who may fall into some lesser differences of opinion, as becometh a follower of the blessed Jesus, his Master and mine. In the practical part of his labours and his ministry, he hath sufficiently shewn himself most happily furnished with all proper gifts and talents, to lead persons of all ranks and ages into serious piety and strict religion. I esteem it a considerable honour, which the providence of God hath done me, when it makes use of me, as an instrument in his hands, to promote the usefulness of this great man in any part of the world: And it is my hearty prayer, that our Lord Jesus, the head of the church, may bless all his labours with most glorious success, either read or heard, in my native language or in any other tongue. I am, Reverend Sir, with much sincerity, your faithful humble servant, and affectionate brother in the gospel of our common Lord,

"ISAAC WATTS."

CHAP. VIII.

His Private Character.

HAVING considered Dr. Doddridge in his public and more important relations, as a minister, tutor, and author, we are now to take a view of his temper and behaviour in private life, and the many virtues, which adorned his domestic and social character.

In December 1730, he married Mrs. Mercy Maris, a native of Worcester; in whom he found a prudent, religious and affectionate companion, and whom God was pleased to continue to him through his whole life *; though he had often been exercised with painful apprehensions of losing her by some threatning disorders. It were easy to enlarge on the affection and tenderness, with which he filled up this relation, if the subject were not of too delicate a nature to admit of a particular detail. It is sufficient to say, that his behaviour in it was founded on the same excellent principles, which influenced the rest of his conduct; and discovered, in a high degree, that sweetness and benevolence of temper, for which he was so remarkable. I shall only add, as it may be a model to others, that I find him, just before his marriage, spending a day in extraordinary devotion, that by the exercises of repentance, faith and prayer, he might bring no guilt into that new state to lessen its comfort, and that he might engage the divine blessing in it; and among some maxims, which he drew up for his conduct in his various relations, in the advance of life, this is inserted; "As a husband, it shall be my daily care to keep up the spirit of religion in my conversation with my wife, to recommend her to the divine blessing, to manifest an obliging tender disposition towards her; and particularly to avoid every thing, which has the appearance of pettishness, to which, amidst my various cares and labours, I may in some unguarded moments, be liable." He kindly interested himself in the concerns of her relations, and when some of them were in circumstances of very great affliction, he exerted himself for their assistance and relief.

In the education of his children, he endeavoured to act upon the advices, which he recommended to others in his ser-

* And survived him a great number of years.

mons upon that subject. He behaved to them in an affectionate and condescending manner, encouraged them to use a proper degree of freedom with him, and carefully avoided that forbidding air, which would have kept them at a distance and rendered his instructions less pleasing and acceptable. Though, through the multiplicity of his business, especially in the latter part of his life, he had less time to employ in their education, than he could have wished, yet he was very solicitous to take every opportunity of impressing their minds with pious and virtuous sentiments. What his resolutions, with regard to the discharge of this important duty, were, will appear from the following extract from his papers: "As a father, it shall be my care to intercede for my children daily; to converse with them often upon some religious subject; to drop some short hints of the serious kind, when there is not room for large discourse; to pray sometimes with them separately; to endeavour to bring them early to communion with the church; to study to oblige them, and secure their affection." He was particularly solicitous to form his children to a catholic, mild and friendly disposition, which he thought of the utmost importance to their own comfort, and their esteem and usefulness in the world. He had observed, that, "too many, from their tenderest years, have been taught to place a part of their religion in the severity with which they censure their brethren; and that a peccant humour, so early wrought into the constitution, will not easily be subdued by the most sovereign medicines." He was therefore very careful not to convey unkind prejudices into their minds, but to educate them in open and generous sentiments; that they might learn to reverence true christianity, wherever they saw it, and to judge of it by essentials rather than by circumstantials.

He behaved to his servants with affability and kindness. Reviling and chiding, his nature abhorred; and that abhorrence increased, the more he studied the gospel. When any thing was greatly amiss in their behaviour, he privately and calmly argued the matter with them, admonished them, and attended the admonition with prayer. He was especially concerned, that they might be truly pious: For this end he gave them bibles, and practical treatises, and often on the Lord's-day evening discoursed seriously with them by themselves, and prayed with them.——Thus did he *walk before his house with an upright heart*, and laboured that they might serve the Lord, and, when they left his family, might be blessings to other families in which they might be fixed. Nothing severe, sour or peevish was seen in his deportment to any of his domestics. He con-

sidered them all as his children, and endeavoured to draw them to their duty with the cords of love.

It would be unpardonable, in this account of Dr. Doddridge, to omit his character as a friend, in which he shone so illustriously. He had a sublime idea of friendship, and a heart turned to relish its noblest joys. He used often to say, "Blessed be God for friendship, and the hope of its being perfected and eternal above! If it be so delightful on earth, amidst our mutual imperfections, what will it be in heaven!" He thus wrote to his best friend Dr. Clark, "It is a great satisfaction to me to think, that, when you cannot speak to me, you can speak to God for me: and however providence may dispose of me for the present, I hope we are to live near each other in a better world, where I may be for ever improving by your conversation and for ever acknowledging, and perhaps repaying, those obligations, which do so immediately relate to that state, that I cannot but think they will be most gratefully remembered there." God honoured him with many valuable and faithful friends; and were it proper to mention their names, it would appear to all, who know them, how justly he valued them and thought himself happy in their esteem and affection. His learning, piety and politeness recommended him to the esteem and friendship of several of high rank and distinguished learning, both among the clergy and laity, with whom he kept up a correspondence. From them he received very obliging letters, expressing in strong terms, the regard they had for his works, and the benefit they had found from them. The esteem of such persons for one in his station, was an ample testimony to his great merit; as nothing but his personal qualifications could recommend him to their notice. He often improved his acquaintance with persons of superior rank and fortune to obtain assistance for some distressed objects, whose case he knew; but solicited no favours for himself. In his plan of secret devotion his friends had a considerable share; and on days of extraordinary devotion, he prayed for them separately, if there was any thing peculiar in their circumstances that required his remembrance. He esteemed it the duty of friends, daily to pray for one another, as a proper expression and the firmest support of their friendship; and he counted the prayers of his friends among his most valuable treasures. When he had occasion to mention some persons of eminence as his friends, he would sometimes add, "Though I do not merit such friends, I know how to value them, and I bless God for them. I am not insensible of the blessing, and I hope ingratitude does not secretly lurk in any corner of my

heart." He always esteemed it the truest act of friendship to use mutual endeavours to render the characters of each other as blameless and as valuable as possible. He often acknowledged, that he looked upon it as a singular mercy of his life, that God had raised him up from time to time, wise and judicious friends, who had his interest at heart; and their prudent cautions were the means of preserving him from many temptations and indiscretions, to which the natural gaiety and sprightliness of his temper, especially in younger life, exposed him. No one had a juster sense of the worth of such friends, and would more readily hearken to their admonitions; and he always owned the goodness of God in giving him a heart to make a proper use of them. "I have never felt, saith he, a more affectionate sense of my obligations, than when those worthy persons who have honoured me with their affection and correspondence, have freely told me what they thought amiss in my temper and conduct." When one of his friends had made an apology for his freedom, in giving him a hint of this kind, he answered; "I thank God, I have not that delicacy of temper, that a friend should need to make an apology for saying and doing a kind and proper thing, when there is, what the foolish taste of the present age may sometimes call, a freedom taken in it. Freedom in friendship is the very soul of it, and its necessary test and support." Many of his friends well know what pains he took, in his correspondence with them, to maintain in their hearts a pious disposition and an active zeal to promote the interest of religion. He longed for opportunities of personal converse with them, that his own heart and theirs might be quickened thereby in the service of their common Lord. Thus he writes to a friend; "I hope soon to see you, and that your company will be a blessing. I want every help to raise my heart to God, and keep it stedfast with him. Indeed I can say, I feel earth and all its concerns growing daily less and less to me. The chief thing I value in it, next to the enjoyment and service of God, is the love and converse of my dear friends." He often used to express the pleasure he had in the enjoyment of his friends, as giving him a delightful foretaste of the happiness of the heavenly world; and the snares and afflictions which arose even from friendship, as increasing his desire of that perfect state. He thus wrote to one of his most esteemed friends, in the year 1722. "Your reflections upon the love of God and the vanity of creature-love are just and pathetic, and I enter fully into the spirit of them. I have a few darling friends, yet from them I meet with frequent disappointments. You, in particular, are always

friendly and kind when I see you, and frequently favour me with your letters; yet though I have some of the most delightful parts of friendship with you, the pain of parting and the impatience of absence embitter even these. Yea, pardon me, if I confess, that were I to converse more intimately with you, I should meet with greater uneasiness. My present happiness lies so much in my friends, that they frequently discompose me. I feel their afflictions more than my own, and am tormented with a thousand imaginary fears on their account, which my affection and not my reason suggests. Every thing which looks like a slight or neglect from them, touches me to the quick; and when I imagine they are out of humour, I am so far from being chearful, that I can hardly be good natured. If they look upon me a little more coldly than ordinary, while they express their affection for another, I am uneasy; and a thousand minute occurrences, which others take no notice of, are to me some of the most solid afflictions of life. They unfit me for pleasure and business; may God forgive me! they unfit me for devotion too. God and the important concernments of the eternal world are neglected and forgotten, while these trifles are admired and pursued.

"And now, if the immoderate love of the most excellent creatures hath such unhappy consequences, let us learn to place our supreme affection upon our Creator; for it is that alone, which can afford us lasting satisfaction. And certainly, if we could but persuade ourselves to love the blessed God, as we ought, the happiness of this life, as well as the hopes of the next, would be fixed upon the most solid, unshaken basis. We should have all the transports of the most unbounded passion, without any of the anguish and perturbation of it. He has no sorrows to be condoled, no unkindness to be suspected, no change to be feared. The united power of the creation cannot give him one moment's uneasiness, nor separate us one moment from his presence and favour; but the great object of our wishes and hopes would be for ever happy and for ever our own. We might converse with him in the most intimate and endearing manner, in every place and in every circumstance of life. Every affliction would then be light, and every duty easy. How ardently should we embrace every opportunity of doing some little matter to testify our respect and affection for him! What a relish would it give to every common enjoyment of life, to consider it as coming from his hand; and that he sends it as a small token of his love, and as the pledge of something infinitely more valuable! Death itself would be

unspeakably desirable, when we could consider it in this view, as retiring with the best of our friends into a nobler apartment, to spend an eternity in his delightful company, without the least interval of sorrow, absence or indifference. It is a happy state; but alas! my friend, when shall we arrive at it? In the mean time, let us cherish this love to him, and labour after more elevated devotion; but we cannot expect it, at least for any constancy, till we have subdued or regulated every meaner passion."

Having endeavoured to lead my readers into Dr. Doddridge's private and domestic character, and laid open as much of his connections and correspondence as may be useful, I shall now proceed to give some account of the manner in which he employed his time, his leading views, his habitual temper, the graces for which he was most eminent; and mention some circumstances and incidents, by which, it is generally allowed, a person's real character may be best known. I hope, by this means, to carry on my principal design, which is, to propose a good example to the world, especially to those who are honoured with the christian ministry; and furnish them with some maxims of wisdom and prudence, which will result from the various lights in which we are to consider him, and the several scenes through which he passed.

[To prevent some inconveniences arising from the unavoidable length of this chapter, it may be proper to divide it into sections.]

SECT. I.

His uncommon Diligence, Activity and Resolution in the Dispatch of Business.

THIS was the most striking part of his character, and must be in general visible to every one, who is acquainted with his writings, and considers his relations, as pastor of a numerous congregation, and an instructor of youth, intended for the ministry. With what assiduity he applied himself to his studies, while a pupil and during his retirement at Kibworth, has been shewn, Chap. I. and II. Yet so intent was his heart upon the great work in which he was engaged, that, while others applauded his diligence in that period, he deeply lamented his mispence of much time. I will insert one of his mournful reflections on this subject, as a specimen of others, and to subserve my main intention; "Upon reviewing the last year I find, that I have trifled away a great deal of time. Not to speak of that which hath been lost in formal devotion, and an indolent

temper in the dispatch of business, I find, upon computation, that I have lost some hundred hours by unnecessary sleep. I have lost many in unnecessary visits, journeys of pleasure, or of business prolonged to an unseasonable length, and by indulging vain roving thoughts while travelling. A multitude of precious hours have been lost in unprofitable discourse, when I have been necessarily engaged in company; for want of taking care to furnish myself with proper subjects of conversation, or not making use of them, or not attending to opportunities of introducing profitable discourse."

In following years he laments the mispence of time in his youth; and reflects, what superior improvements he might have made in learning and piety, and how much more useful he might have been, had he exerted more diligence in those days, when he had fewer avocations than when he lived in a large town, appeared under a more public character, and his labours and connections were increased. He endeavoured then to make up, what he thought, his culpable deficiency by habitual diligence in his proper business. In this view he rose early and sat up late. He reckoned the smallest parcels of time precious, and was eager to seize every moment, even while he was waiting for dinner, company, or his pupils, assembling together, that he might make some advance in the work he was about. Doing nothing was his greatest fatigue. He thought, and often told his pupils, that one good work was the best relaxation from another; and therefore he would not allow any chasm between the several kinds and branches of business he was to transact. He found it an infelicity to have his thoughts divided between two affairs which lay before him; and observed, that as much time had been sometimes spent in deliberating which of the two should be entered upon first, as would have finished one, if not both. To prevent this, he laid as exact a plan of business, as he could, at the beginning of every year; but as this alone was too complicated and extensive, he had also his plan for every month and sometimes for every week, besides what was to be done in his stated course of lectures and public services. He contrived to have a few hours every week, to which no particular business was allotted: These he set down, as a kind of cash account, in which any unexpected affair was to be transacted, or the time lost by accidental hindrances might be in some measure retrieved, without breaking in upon his general plan.

Through all his riper years he kept an exact account how he spent his time; when he rose; how many hours had been employed in study or the more public duties of his station; how

much time was really, at least in his apprehension, trifled aw and what were the causes of its loss. Under this last particul I find him lamenting taking up a book, with which he had immediate concern, and which yet engaged his attention and broke in upon the proper duties of his study. He laments, another occasion, pursuing too long some abstruse mathemati enquiries, the advantages of which were by no means an equ valent for the time employed in them. He often complains of the loss of time by some visits, which civility and good manners obliged him to pay; and resolves not to make himself such a slave to the customs of the world, as to neglect more important duties out of regard to them. He found even friendship a snare to him; and that the company of his friends produced some ill effects, with regard to his business and religious frame. "While I have had company with me, he writes, my work hath been interrupted; secret devotion straitened; the divine life reduced to a low ebb, as to its sensible workings, though my heart continued right with God." At another time; "Too much company, though very agreeable to me, led me to neglect some part of my business, and turned that, in which I so much rejoiced as a very pleasing circumstance, into a mischief rather than a benefit. Had I been resolute to have commanded an hour or two in the morning, I should have been less embarrassed through the day. I will therefore be more watchful and self-denying on this head." He was desirous to do the work of every day in its day, and never defer it till the morrow; knowing there would be business enough remaining for that day, and all the days and hours of his life. He thought (and his own temper shewed it) that activity and chearfulness were so nearly allied, that one can hardly take a more effectual method to secure the latter, than to cultivate the former; especially when it is employed to sow the seeds of an immortal harvest, which will be rich and glorious, in proportion to our present diligence and zeal."

So solicitous was he to improve every moment, that one of his pupils generally read to him, when he was dressing and shaving. In these short intervals he was improving himself and them, by remarking on their manner of reading, and pointing out to them the excellencies or defects of sentiment and language in the book read. When he was upon a journey, or occasional visits to his friends, where he spent the night, he took his papers with him, and employed all the time he could seize, especially his morning hours, in carrying on some good work for his people, his pupils or the world. While he was preparing his Family Expositor for the press, he did something at it

daily. When an intimate friend had expressed some fear, lest his academy should be neglected, while he was preparing some works for the public, he thus wrote to him; "So far as I can recollect, I never omitted a single lecture on account of any of the books that I have published. The truth is, I do a little now and then; something every day, and that carries me on. I have wrote some of my pieces in short-hand, and got them transcribed by my pupils, and thus I do by many letters. This is a help to me, and some considerable advantage to those whom I employ. I scarce fail being in the lecture-room three hours every morning; that carries me through my stated work, and, with the concurrence of my assistant, I over-see the academy pretty well."—So great was his diligence in his master's work, that he often preached several days in a week in different villages about Northampton, and chose the evening for those services, that his lectures might not be omitted.—During his annual vacation, which continued two months, one of them was usually spent in close study, pastoral visits, or making little circuits among the neighbouring congregations, by the desire of their respective pastors; preaching to each in his way, not excepting some of different sentiments and denominations from himself. In the other month, he visited his friends in London, and other parts of the kingdom, finding such excursions and journeys serviceable to his health; yet he pursued his studies and writings, and frequently preached occasional sermons, especially in London and its environs, almost every day. I find that in some years he preached one hundred and forty times, in others many more; besides his repetitions, expositions and devotional lectures at home. So that the exhortations he gave his brethren, in his discourse on "The Evil and Danger of Neglecting the Souls of Men," came with peculiar grace and propriety from him, as they were illustrated by his own example.

Nor must I, in this connection, omit his correspondence; which was almost large enough to have taken up the whole time of a person of common abilities and industry*. His letters were principally of business, and that of the most important kinds. Besides his correspondence with the parents and guardians of his pupils, he had many letters to write

* Sometimes he lightened his burden, by making use of the pen of his pupils, to whom he dictated his letters, while he himself went on with his Family Expositor or any other work in which he was employed. I was not unfrequently either his amanuensis on these occasions, or read to him while he answered his correspondents.—K.

in answer to questions of moment, proposed to him by his brethren, especially those who had been his pupils, and by congregations at a distance, who applied to him for direction and assistance. His judgment was often desired by learned men, concerning critical difficulties, or works which they were preparing for the press; and his own publications would naturally enlarge his work of this kind. His correspondence with some persons of the first rank for wisdom and learning in the established church required much attention and delicacy. Several foreign gentlemen and divines, who had heard of his character and read his works, sought his epistolary acquaintance, and corresponding with them in Latin or French required some particular application. It is surprising to find how many hundred letters he received and answered in the space of one year*. I may say of him, as Pliny of his uncle, "When I consider his dispatch of so much business, I wonder at the multiplicity of his reading and writing; and when I consider this, I wonder at that." But his resolution was indefatigable, and God had given him a happy facility in the dispatch of business. He was master of the contents of a book upon a summary view, and could readily express his thoughts upon the most abstruse questions with ease and perspicuity. It is wonderful that his tender constitution should, for so many years, support such an intense application to business, so unfavourable to health. His friends were often expressing their painful apprehension, that it would impair his health and shorten his days, and addressing him with that carnal advice, *Master, spare thyself*: And, with regard to his last illness in particular, it might have been happy for them and the world had he regarded it. But love to God and man, and zeal for the salvation of souls bore him on. He needed no recreation; for his work was his highest pleasure. When he saw any success of his labours, and found that his writings were useful to many, it gave him fresh spirits and resolution. When he was advised, by a friend, to relax a little and not preach so often, his answer was, "Be in no pain about me. I hope that we have the presence of God among us, and that he is *bearing testimony to the word of his grace*. I take all the care of my health, which is consistent with do-

* A very honourable part of Dr. Doddridge's correspondence was that which he maintained with some of the brightest ornaments, both among the clergy and laity of the established church. This is apparent from the collection of letters lately published. We there see how much he was esteemed, and how highly he was thought of, by the first religious and literary characters of the age.—K.

ing the proper duties of life; and when I find myself refreshed rather than fatigued with these attempts of service, I cannot think myself fairly discharged from continuing them." To another friend he thus writes; "I am indeed subject to a little cough, but I never preached with more freedom and pleasure. I am generally employed, with very short intervals, from morning to night, and have seldom more than six hours in bed; yet such is the goodness of God to me, that I seldom know what it is to be weary. I hope my labours are not in vain. There are those, who drink in the word with great eagerness; and I hope it will be found, that it is not merely as the barren sand drinks in the rain, but rather that it falls on ground, which divine grace will make prolific. This animates me to my labours." In short, he lived much in a little time; and thought it was better to wear himself out in his Master's service, than rust in literary indolence, or drag on a longer life, when his vivacity and activity might be so much diminished, as in the course of nature they generally are.—The motto of his family arms was, *Dum vivimus vivamus;* under which he wrote the following lines, very expressive of his general temper:

"Live, while you live," the *epicure* would say,
"And seize the pleasures of the present day*."
"Live, while you live," the sacred *preacher* cries,
"And give to God each moment as it flies†."
"Lord, in my views let both united be;
"I live in *pleasure*, when I live to *thee*‡."

SECT. II.

His Attempts to do Good, and to promote and encourage the Zeal of others, beyond the Limits of his own Congregation and Family.

WE have seen what uncommon and almost unparalleled diligence Dr. Doddridge exercised, and with what care he applied himself to the duties of his station, as a pastor, and a tutor.

* 1 Cor. xv. 32. † Eccl. ix. x.

‡ Dr. Johnson's opinion of these lines was, that they constituted one of the finest epigrams in the English language.

Mr. Doddridge had a talent at satirical epigrams; an instance of which is the following, written on one of his pupils, a weak young man who thought that he had invented a method of flying to the moon.

"And will Volatio leave this world so soon,
To fly to his own native seat, the moon?
'Twill stand, however, in some little stead,
That he sets out with such an empty head."—K.

But that zeal for God and pious concern for the salvation of men, which glowed in his breast and led him to this diligence, carried him yet further; and excited him to embrace every opportunity of doing good to the souls of his fellow-creatures. He often conversed with strangers, whom he accidentally met with, about their religious concerns in a prudent and friendly manner. There are some instances of this kind mentioned in his papers, where he had reason to hope, that a serious lasting impression was made upon their hearts by such conversation.——He generally attended the condemned malefactors at Northampton, with a compassionate view to promote their salvation. Besides conversing and praying with them, he expounded and preached to them; and once he expounded the fifty-first psalm to several, who were to suffer together, with which they seemed to be much affected. Moreover, he laboured to quicken all, to whom he had access, to pious and benevolent services, and to assist and encourage those, who were employing their time and abilities in them. He thought a prudent active zeal for the interest of religion, one of the best evidences of a pious heart. Thus writing to a friend, he saith, "I am just returned from visiting your relation. I find her in a peaceable and happy state, amidst almost total blindness, deafness and other infirmities of age. She is not indeed favoured with such sensible supports and manifestations of the divine love, as she could wish: but hath, what I think yet more desirable, a most affectionate zeal for the glory of God and good of men, and talks with such a hearty concern for the interest of real religion, as revived my heart."

He greatly lamented the indolence of many christian ministers; even some that were most distinguished for their philosophical and critical learning. While he saw no evidence that was applied to the grand ends of the ministry, he looked upon it as little better than laborious trifling. One of his brethren of great abilities was so fond of retirement and study, that he was averse to settling with a congregation and to any public services: To him he thus addressed in 1724; "I am sorry that you think of spending your life in a hermitage, in this learned and polite luxury. God hath endowed you with capacities, which are not always to be buried in retirement. So bright a lamp was not lighted up to consume in a sepulchre, but to be fixed on an eminence, where its rays may be diffused with public advantage, and conduct many through this gloomy desart to the regions of eternal glory.

I hope therefore and believe, it is your constant care to make all your studies subservient to the views of such services. When providence calls you to a more public appearance, I hope you will be willing to quit your cell, charming as it is, that you may enter upon employments at least more important, if not more delicate, than those, which you now pursue. This is a piece of self-denial, which duty requires us to submit to; and which will be acceptable to God in proportion to our fondness for those elegancies, which we are contented to interrupt and postpone, that we may attend to the advancement of his kingdom and interest. We know the applause of our heavenly master will be an abundant recompence for all the pleasures we have given up for his sake; and before we receive that public remuneration, we shall find such entertainment in the exercise of benevolence to our fellow-creatures, and the hope of promoting their everlasting felicity, as we shall never find in conversing with Virgil or Tully, Pliny or Addison, or any of the favourite attendants of our solitude."——When he saw any of his pupils or younger brethren indolent, or not applying their time and talents to the care of souls, he would freely expostulate with them; and if ever his zeal was excessive, it was here. When he saw, how much was needful to be done for Christ and souls, and how little really was done, by many persons of great abilities and religious characters, his spirit was moved within him. He took occasion, therefore, when he preached before his brethren, to urge every consideration and motive, that was likely to increase their activity. His discourse on "The Evil and Danger of Neglecting the Souls of Men," contains many forcible arguments on this head, sufficient to rouse the spirit of every minister, that is not sunk into stupidity.

He esteemed it a fault in some worthy ministers, that they were backward to engage in public services, at the stated assemblies of ministers, and on occasional days of prayer or thanksgiving. The multiplicity of his business and the importance of his domestic engagements, might have been a reasonable apology for his absence from such meetings, or for being generally excused from performing any part of the service; yet he was seldom absent, except hindered by sickness, and made no difficulty of complying with the desire of his brethren to take a share of the work. He thought, that for ministers to decline, or to need much entreaty, to engage on such occasions, was disrespectful to their brethren, and was setting a bad example before their young associates; while it seemed to furnish their

hearers with something of a plausible pretence for refusing to engage in social prayer, or even to pray in their own families: on this principle he was determined to act, though he might be, as he sometimes was, charged with vanity and love of applause for so doing.—In order to make the meetings of ministers turn to a better account, than he feared they had generally done, he endeavoured to promote more regular associations; that the hands of each other might be strengthened by united consultation and prayer, and that they might concur in some schemes for the revival of religion. What he attempted of this kind, may be seen in the preface to the sermon above mentioned; and the attentive reader of it will perceive, how well it was adapted to pomote piety, zeal and love among ministers and their congregations.

He was solicitous, that something more might be done among the dissenting churches, towards the propagation of christianity abroad, and spreading it in some of the darker parts of our own land. His scheme for this purpose may be seen in the same preface: It would too much swell this work to insert either of the plans in it. I mention them in this connection, as evidences of his fervent zeal to serve the cause of christianity and vital religion; and it is hoped the publication of them hath tended to inspire a like zeal into others. With the same views, he generously contributed towards publishing some practical books in the Welch language. He was a hearty friend to the success of a society in Scotland, for propagating christian knowledge, especially in North America, of which he was a corresponding member. He lamented that there were so few missionaries among the Indians near our settlements there; and was very desirous to train up some serious youths of good health and resolution to be employed in that capacity. Two of his pupils were educated with this view, and would cheerfully have gone upon the service; but their nearest relations would not permit them. "Such, saith he, is the weakness of their faith and love! I hope I can truly say, that, if God would put it into the heart of my only Son to go under this character, I could willingly part with him, though I were to see him no more. What are the views of a family and a name, when compared with a regard to extending my Redeemer's kingdom and gaining souls to Christ?"

He was desirous to countenance and encourage all those, who appeared to have the interest of religion much at heart, and to be zealous to instruct and save souls, though they were of different sentiments and persuasions from himself. He at first entertained a good opinion of Count Zinzendorf, and his

associates, from the accounts he had received of them, as a late Archbishop of Canterbury, and many other wise and pious men had done; and he spoke of them in honourable terms. But what he observed of his crude notions of religion, in an interview he had with him; and what he read of them in his sermons and hymns, convinced him, that, whatever the Count's private views were, his manner of representing some doctrines of the gospel, and particularly his disrelish for all of them, but those which relate to *the Lamb*, as his followers generally call our blessed Lord, did Christ very little honour and tended little to christian edification. He was cautious of entering into any intimacy with his associates: "For, saith he, I would remember, that it is a supposable, yea a probable case, that ill designing men may endeavour to promote enthusiasm and divide churches, merely with a view to enrich and exalt themselves, as heads of a party." But when he heard that some of the Count's followers despised prayer, made light of holiness, and run into other pernicious errors, he concluded that they were bad men, preaching with mean and interested views. He was preparing a letter to Count Zinzendorf, containing a serious Address to him and Expostulation with him; and warning others against the errors and enormities into which his followers had run, and which had filled so many serious minds, who once thought well of them, with wonder and horror.

He had a favourable opinion of some of those clergymen of the church of England, who went under the name of methodists. By the conversation he had with some of them, and what he had read of their discourses, he was led to hope and believe, that they honestly intended the advancement of religion. He thought it some justification of their itinerant preaching, that they went principally, at least at first, among the most ignorant, rude and profane persons, who scarce ever attended any place of worship; that the state of religion was low and melancholy, and there was too little seriousness, zeal, and a care to insist upon the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, among ministers. He had seen some good effects of their labours in his own neighbourhood; he had heard of more, from sufficient authority; and this left him no room to doubt but God had owned them. "I cannot but think, saith he, that by the success of some of these despised men, God is rebuking the madness of those, who think themselves the only wise men, and in a remarkable manner making bare his mighty arm." He was very sensible of their errors and defects; but had observed, in the history of former times, that many persons of great piety, zeal and benevolence had been led, partly by their

popularity and success, and partly by an ill-judged opposition to them, into some unjustifiable measures; and yet had been instruments of great usefulness in the world.

This was the case with some of the reformers from popery. With regard to these men, he thought some of their errors were pitiable, rather than blameable: That some of them were to be imputed to faults in their education; the want of being led through a regular plan of lectures in divinity, and into an orderly method of studying the evidences, doctrines and duties of christianity. He hoped that further knowledge of themselves, the world and religion, would give them more judicious sentiments; and that the censures and contempt, which they met with from so many of their brethren, would make them more humble and cautious. He was well aware that there was some enthusiasm in them and much among their followers: But he thought that, nevertheless, they might be useful, as he knew they had been, in rousing men's attention, engaging them to bend their thoughts towards their eternal concerns; in leading them to read and study the scriptures, and attend religious worship in places, where they might be better instructed and edified. "In some extraordinary conversions, saith he, there may be and often is a tincture of enthusiasm: But, having weighed the matter diligently, I think a man had better be a sober, honest, chaste, industrious enthusiast, than live without any regard to God and religion at all. I think it infinitely better that a man should be a religious methodist, than an adulterer, a thief, a swearer, a drunkard or a rebel to his parents, as I know some actually were, who have been wrought upon and reformed by these preachers." This was the sentiment of one of the most judicious divines of the last age, Dr. Whichcote; "I am much of his mind, who did thus apologize for those who did dissent, though they were in an error; they do not err in their affection to God, religion and goodness though perhaps they are mistaken in their choice. But then it is far better for men to have some mistakes in their way, than to be devoid of religion. It is better for men to be in some mistakes about religion, than wholly to neglect it. These very things argue that the persons are awake, and are in search after truth, even there, where they have not attained to it*.

When Dr. Doddridge saw some of these persons running into errors, he was cautious of giving them any encouragement. Many friendly and faithful admonitions he gave them; and it was no inconsiderable evidence of the humility and can-

* Select Sermons, p. 240.

dour of some of their leaders, that they desired him freely to tell them, what he thought amiss in their sentiments or conduct, and that they received his admonitions with thankfulness. He endeavoured to shew them their errors and to regulate their zeal; which he thought a more friendly part and more becoming a christian minister, than to revile or ridicule them. He saw some persons acting under the sanction of their names, who were both ignorant and licentious; and these he discouraged to the utmost. He often expressed his wish, that ministers, instead of railing at them from the pulpit and the press, and endeavouring to expose them, would imitate them in what was truly commendable. As they saw the common people struck and captivated with their address and appearance of zeal, he wished their wiser brethren would plainly and seriously preach the gospel, take due care of the souls committed to them, and labour more abundantly in their Master's work; and thereby secure yet greater popularity and acceptance by means, which they themselves must think just and laudable: For these he thought it their duty to use, whatever their particular sentiments and stations were.*

He was severely censured, especially by some of his brethren, for the civility and encouragement he shewed to some of the leaders of the methodists, and several angry letters were sent him on this subject. To such censures he thus answered; "I wish there were less zeal and rage against these men. It has always been a maxim with me, not to believe any flying story to the prejudice of those, whom I had apparent reason, from what I knew of them, to esteem. I am ready to hope and believe the best of those, who seem to have the cause of religion so much at heart. But I am very far from justifying them in all the steps they have taken, or approving all the lengths they have run; and with their anathemas and uncharitable censures I am greatly displeased. I see some of them running into extravagancies, which grieve me to the heart: And if any will be

* Perhaps this important hint may come more unexceptionally from a worthy clergyman of the church of England; "The nation hath been much alarmed of late with reports concerning the growth and increase of methodism. Would we put a stop to the farther progress of it? There is one way by which it may be done: And let us of the established clergy join hand and heart in the work; *viz.* to live more holy, pray more fervently, preach more heavenly, and labour more diligently, than the methodist ministers appear to do. Then shall we soon hear that field-preaching is at an end; and christians will flock to the churches to hear us, as they now flock to the fields to hear them." Andrew's Scripture Doctrine of Grace, in answer to the Bishop of Gloucester, p. 222. n.

so unjust as to impute these things to me, because I dare not join in reviling, censuring and judging them, as some do, amidst their acknowledged infirmities and mistakes, I must wait quietly till *the day of the Lord:* and I humbly hope that he will, in the mean time appear to support my character, as far as his glory and the good of souls is concerned in it; and further than that, I am not anxiously concerned about it." By acting in this tender, candid manner, he might, perhaps, commend and encourage some, who appeared to be zealous for the salvation of souls, before he had sufficient opportunities of knowing what their principles and views were; or the accounts he had received of the success of their labours might be exaggerated; or they might represent him, as encouraging them more than he did. He might also think some of their errors of much less consequence, than his brethren did. But these are often the weaknesses of the best minds; and, as a good judge of human nature says, "*Ut quisque est vir optimus, ita difficillimè esse alios improbos suspicatur**. The better a man himself is, the less will he be inclined to suspect others of bad designs."

SECT. III.

His Catholicism, Moderation and friendly Behaviour to Persons of different Sentiments and Persuasions.

Dr. DODDRIDGE had diligently studied the gospel, and had just ideas of the extent and importance of christian liberty. He had impartially examined the controversy between the established church of England, and the protestant dissenters, and thought it his duty to adhere to the latter. He thus wrote to one of his fellow-students on this subject; "I am now more fully studying the business of conformity; and for that purpose am reading the controversy between Bishop Hoadly and Dr. Calamy; as indeed I think it necessary to examine into the affair, before I determine upon being ordained among the dissenters. Upon the whole, I must say, that, as nothing hath had a greater tendency to confirm my belief of christianity than the most celebrated writings of Jews and deists; and my adhering to the protestant cause than the apologies of many of the roman catholics; so the study of the best defenders of the church of England, which I have yet seen, hath added a great deal of weight to my former persuasion, not only of the lawfulness but expediency of a separation from it. Yet when I see how many plausible arguments may be advanced on the contrary side, I am not in-

* Cic. Ep. ad Q. Fratr.

clinable to censure those, who yield to the force of them." His generous heart never confined truth and goodness to one particular sect, nor in any other respect appeared bigotted to that, or uncharitable to those who differed from him. The principles on which he acted will be seen by the following extracts from his writings. "I look upon the dissenting interest, saith he, to be the cause of truth, honour, and liberty; and I will add, in a great measure, the cause of serious piety too. It was not merely a generous sense of liberty (which may warm the breast of a deist, or an atheist) but a religious reverence for the divine authority, which animated our pious forefathers to so resolute and so expensive an opposition to the attempts, which were made in their days to invade the rights of conscience, and the throne of God, its only sovereign. And if the cause be not still maintained on the same principles, I think it will hardly be worth our while to be much concerned about maintaining it at all*."

In his dedication of a Sermon to the pious Mr. Hervey, he thus expresseth himself; "You being, I doubt not, persuaded in your own mind that diocesan episcopacy is of divine original," and that "the church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies and authority in controversies of faith," have solemnly declared that belief; and in consequence of it, have obliged yourself to render canonical obedience to those, whom you thereby acknowledge as governing you by an authority delegated from Christ; that thus you may be *subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake*, and thereby approve your submission to him. I have declined that subjection; not from any disrespect to the persons of the established ecclesiastical governors (many of whom I hold in the highest esteem and number among the most distinguished ornaments of our common christianity) and least of all from an unwillingness to yield subjection, where I apprehend Christ to have appointed it; for, so far as I know my own heart, it would be my greatest joy to bow, with all humility, to any authority delegated from him: But I will freely tell you and the world, my non-conformity is founded on this, that I assuredly believe the contrary, to what the constitution of the church of England requires me to declare, on the above-mentioned heads and some others, to be the truth. And I esteem it much more eligible to remain under an incapacity of sharing its honours and revenues, than to open my way to a

* Free Thoughts, &c.

possibility of obtaining them, by what would in me, while I have such an apprehension, be undoubtedly an act of prevarication, hypocrisy and falsehood; reverencing herein the authority of God, and remembering the account I must shortly give in his presence."——Yet he behaved with the utmost candour to the members of the established church. "I would be far, saith he, from confining all true religion to the members of our own congregations. I am very well aware, that there is a multitude of excellent persons in the establishment, both among the clergy and laity, who, in their different stations, are burning and shining lights; such as reflect a glory on the human nature and the christian profession." He always spoke of the established religion of our country with respect.

In explaining those texts of scripture in his Family Expositor, in which he could not avoid shewing his sentiments in some points of discipline, different from those which generally prevail, he conscientiously abstained from all reproaches; "To which indeed, saith he, I am on no occasion inclined, and which I should esteem peculiarly indecent, where the religious establishment of my country is in question; and above all, where a body of men would be affected, many of whom have been, and are among the ablest advocates and brightest ornaments of christianity. I have been also careful to adjust my expressions with as much tenderness and respect, as integrity and that reverence, which an honest man would owe to the judgment of his own conscience, were it more singular than mine, would admit*.——He never made any petulant objections against the worship or discipline of the church of England, nor uttered any severe or unkind reflections upon it. Indeed he very seldom mentioned the grounds of the difference between it and the dissenters in the pulpit; and when his subject naturally led him to it, he took occasion to shew how small the things in debate were, compared with those important principles and truths, in which they agreed.—He always spoke in the most respectful terms of the worthy clergy of the established church; thought himself happy in the intimate friendship of some of them, and kept up a friendly correspondence with others, even with some of the highest rank in it. Upon the same principles, he rejoiced, when he had opportunity, as he sometimes had, of serving any of them in their secular or ministerial interests.—— He deeply lamented, that separation from the communion of that church was, in his apprehension and that of many other

* Expositor, V. 3. Pref. p. ix. 4to. ed.

good men, made so necessary. He heartily wished and prayed for a greater union among protestants; and longed for the happy time, when, to use his own words, "The question would be, not how much may we lawfully impose, and how much may we lawfully dispute? but on the one side, what may we wave, and on the other, what may we acquiesce in? from a principle of mutual tenderness and respect, without displeasing our common Lord, and injuring that great cause of original christianity, which he hath appointed us to guard." Having mentioned to one of his friends a candid letter he had received from a bishop, he adds, "O that God would open a way to a stricter union among protestants of every denomination! But the darkness of our minds, the narrowness of our hearts, and our attachment to private interest make it, I fear, in a great measure, impracticable." "I greatly rejoice," saith he on another occasion, "when I see in those, whom upon other accounts I most highly esteem, as the excellent of the earth, that their prejudices against their brethren of any denomination are subdued, as mine against the writers of the establishment early were, and that we are coming nearer to the harmony, in which I hope we shall ever be one in Christ Jesus."

One of his correspondents had informed him of a report spread in London, in 1750, that he was about to conform to the church of England, to which he thus answereth; "Assure those, who may have heard of the report, that though my growing acquaintance with many excellent persons, some of them of great eminence, in the establishment increases those candid, respectful sentiments of that body of christians, which I had long entertained; yet I am so thorougly persuaded of the reasonableness of nonconformity, and find many of the terms of ministerial conformity so contrary to the dictates of my conscience in the sight of God, that I never was less inclined to submit to them; and hope I shall not be willing to buy my liberty or my life at that price. But I think it my duty to do my part towards promoting that mutual peace and good will, which I think more likely than any thing else, either to reform the church, or at least to promote true christianity, both in the establishment and separation; to strengthen the protestant cause, and defeat the designs of our common enemies. And, conscious that I speak and act from these principles, and that I am approved of God in it, I do not fear the resentments of any narrow-spirited persons. I would not be a knight-errant in the cause of candour itself; nor would I so fear the imputation of mean and unworthy de-

signs, as to be deterred, by the apprehension of it, from what is in itself right. For at that rate, from what may we not be deterred? I am much more solicitous to deserve well of the public, than about the returns I may meet with for doing it."

But his catholic sentiments on this head will more fully appear from a passage in his preface to Archbishop Leighton's expository works, which I think must give great pleasure to every benevolent mind. "It is truly my grief, that any thing should divide me from the fullest communion with those, to whom I am united in the bonds of as tender affection as I bear to any of my fellow-christians. And it is my daily prayer, that God would, by his gentle but powerful influence on our minds, mutually dispose us more and more for such an union, as may most effectually consolidate the protestant cause, establish the throne of our gracious sovereign, remove the scandal our divisions have occasioned, and strengthen our hands in those efforts, by which we are attempting, and might then I hope more successfully attempt the service of our common christianity. In the mean time, I desire most heartily to bless God for any advances that are made towards it." He illustrates and confirms his thoughts and hopes on this head, by the words of a familiar letter he had received, from a worthy member of the church of England, well known in the learned world. "I am glad, saith his correspondent, that christianity begins so well to be understood and taught by so many men of parts and learning in all sects; the fruits of which appear in a candour and charity, unknown to all ages of the church, except the primitive, I had almost said, the apostolic age. Doth not this give you a prospect, though perhaps still very distant, of the completion of the famous prophecy, that speaks of *the lion and the lamb lying down together* in the kingdom of the Messiah? Lions there have been in all churches; but too many fierce, greedy and bloodthirsty lions, though often disguised like lambs; and some lambs there have been simple enough, to think it expedient for the flock to assume the habit and terror of lions. But I hope they now begin to undeceive themselves, and to consider christianity, as intended to bring back the world to that state of innocence, which it enjoyed before the fall. To attain this happy state, all christians should unite their amiable endeavours: And instead of looking out for, and insisting upon, points of difference and distinction, seek for those only, in which they do or may agree. They may at least sow the seeds of peace and unity, though they should not live to reap

the fruit of it in this world. *Blessed are the peace-makers,* saith the Prince of peace, *for they shall be called the children of God:* An appellation infinitely more honourable than that of pastor, bishop, archbishop, patriarch, cardinal or pope; and attended with a recompence infinitely surpassing the richest revenues of the highest ecclesiastical dignities." "I join," adds the Doctor, "my hearty wish and prayer with those of my much esteemed friend, that we may all more and more deserve this character, and attain its reward."

I am persuaded, that nothing ever appeared, in his lectures, correspondence or private discourse, inconsistent with these sentiments, which he hath publicly avowed; especially in his sermon on christian candour and unanimity. He laboured to promote a like candid and friendly spirit in his pupils. He exhorted them to treat their brethren of the establishment with respect; never to utter any invectives against the constitution or forms of the church of England; and if providence should fix them near humble, peaceable, pious clergymen, to honour and love them, to cultivate a friendship with them, to study to serve them and promote their reputation and interest. These were the advices of the lecture-room: And I have the pleasure to know, that those of his pupils, with whom I am acquainted, have acted upon these catholic instructions, and been remarkable for their candour and moderation, in consequence of the pains he took, by his instructions and example, to instill these virtues into them, and his laying before them the arguments on both sides of contested questions.

Whoever considers how numerous the protestant dissenters in this kingdom are; that they claim a liberty of chusing their own ministers, of judging for themselves of the sense of scripture, and what rites and modes of worship that enjoins; and where there is no particular rule, of determining for themselves what is most subservient to christian edification; whoever considers this, will not wonder that there have been, and are, different sentiments among them; that they are ranged under different denominations, and that there are sometimes divisions and contentions among them. These Dr. Doddridge saw and lamented; and was as careful, as he could be, consistently with keeping a good conscience, to be upon friendly terms with them all, to shew a candid temper to those of a different persuasion, and promote the like in them. "He was very little inclined to contend about technical phrases of human invention, which have, with equal frailty, been idolized by some and anathematized

by others." A rigid spirit, and a stiffness about indifferent things, he very much disliked; especially when attended with uncharitableness. He thought "there was always reason to suspect those persons and principles, that would alienate our hearts from any of the faithful servants of Christ, because they do not agree with our sentiments about the circumstantials of religion; and that christians had great need to be cautious, lest they abuse their liberty to gratify those irregular passions, which, to whatever high original they may pretend, were indeed to be traced no higher than a carnal principle, and to be numbered among the *works of the flesh*." It grieved him to see impositions upon conscience any where; especially among dissenters, as they were so evidently contrary to their own principles. "Our interest, saith he, hath received great damage by unscriptural impositions and uncharitable contentions with each other."

It appears from what was said above of his behaviour to his pupils, that he thought it unjust in itself, and very injurious to the interest of religion, to be rigorous with young ministers and students about their particular sentiments, and to tye them down to profess their assent to formularies, containing points of a very abstruse or a very doubtful nature: He thought it also foolish in the imposers, as being likely to prejudice them against those points, and drive them into the opposite, and perhaps worse extreme. When therefore the author of "Christianity not founded on Argument" had derided this practice, he left others to defend it, who were chargeable with it, or approved it. It was an inviolable maxim with him, "never to condemn his brethren as having forfeited all title to the name of christians, because their creeds or confessions of faith did not come up to the standard of his own; yea, he thought that if it were a matter that seemed of so great importance, as to give some room to suspect, that the mistake was fatal (which surely nothing can be, which does not greatly affect men's temper towards God and each other) even that consideration should engage us to gentleness and tenderness, rather than severity, if peradventure we may remove their prejudices."*

He thought separations in churches very seldom happened, but there were errors and faults on both sides. In some instances of this kind, both parties made their appeal to him; and, upon the most impartial survey of the grounds of the difference, he sometimes saw reason to blame, and therefore often displeased

* Sermon on Candour.

both. In some of those, which came to his knowledge, and which arose from the people's dislike to their ministers, he found them owing to the departure of those ministers, from what their people apprehended the most weighty truths of the gospel; to their want of a more serious spirit, and a due sense of the importance of their work; to their not addressing their hearers in a plain, lively manner; or to their neglecting pastoral inspection, and complying too much with fashionable diversions and follies; and then shewing too warm a resentment, if their people expressed any dissatisfaction on these accounts. In some letters on such occasions, he thus expresseth himself; "The edification and comfort of souls does not depend on those niceties of sentiment and expression, which too often divide wise and good men; but on something common to them all, which, because we forget, we quarrel with one another about other things. It is for want of going so far, as they reasonably might, and in duty ought, even upon their own principles, that so many rash young men ruin their reputation and usefulness and the congregations under their care. I have seen some instances of divisions, which have been owing to the over-bearing temper of some wealthy men, and despising the poorer sort. No pains have been taken, by meekness and condescension, to lessen their prejudices; though some of them are, in other respects, most excellent persons; and their zeal, though carried perhaps to an extreme, ariseth from a deep conviction of the importance of religion and the gospel; while a great deal of what is called charity in others, is either ignorance of religion or indifference to it. I have seen many bigots for liberty, and a remarkable want of candour in some great pretenders to it. I have known some leaders in that cause, which declares most for charity, who have not been very ready to put a charitable construction upon the conduct of those, who were not in the same sentiments; but have imputed their zeal to the love of money or power. The boasted patrons of liberty would have exclaimed, if all the good things they have done were to be charged to some such low motive. We should then have heard much of its being the prerogative of God to judge hearts, and the like. Such reasoning is no less true and applicable in one case, than in the other. What pity is it we should be so inconsistent with ourselves!—I think persons have a right to judge for themselves in the choice of their ministers, and that it is a very unwarrantable infringement of christian liberty to deny that right, or shew any resentment towards those who make use of it; and in protestant dissenters, quite inexcus-

able. In cases of separation, I think it the wisdom and duty of my brethren, to treat any minister, whom a church separated from theirs shall chuse, with whatever degree of kindness and respect his temper and conduct might entitle him to in any other situation; without imputing to him any thing, that might seem matter of complaint in that body of men, from whom he received the invitation. It is most for the peace of ministers and the churches over which they preside, that those, who are discontented under their ministry, should have a place to receive them, rather than continue where they were on uneasy terms. God knows, I have no part in dividing counsels, though I have been charged with it, or any thing that should alienate the hearts of good men from each other."

Upon these maxims he acted himself, and found the comfort of it. There was a congregation in Northampton, which chiefly consisted of those, who had separated from his before he settled there: Nevertheless he lived upon the most friendly terms with them, as he believed they acted agreeably to the convictions of their own consciences. He rejoiced when they had a worthy minister of moderate principles, treated him in a brotherly manner and did him all the service in his power: particularly, he procured for him an annual allowance towards his better support, by the favourable representation he made of his temper and character, and by assuring those, who were concerned in the allowance, that he should take it as no offence to himself. He was desirous to turn the zeal of his brethren into a right channel, to persuade them to suspend at least their debates upon smaller matters, that they might with united efforts concur in prosecuting that great design, for which the gospel was revealed, the spirit given, and their office instituted. "Since it is so evident, saith he, that irreligion hath gained ground upon us, while we have been attending to other, and, to be sure, lesser matters, let us, by a plain, serious, zealous way of preaching the most vital truths of christianity, joined with a diligent inspection of the souls committed to our care, try what can be done to prevent the progress of this growing apostacy, and recover the ground we have lost. Ignorant and prejudiced men may perhaps accuse us of bigotry or enthusiasm; but let us do our best to convince them of their error, by the candour of our temper and the prudence of our conduct*."

* Sermons on Regeneration, Pref.

While he was thus candid and moderate towards his protestant brethren, he had a just abhorrence of the tenets of popery, and especially its persecuting spirit; as he hath shewn in his comments on those passages of the New Testament, which refer to this great apostacy, and in his much admired sermon, on "The Absurdity and Iniquity of Persecution for Conscience Sake in all its Kinds and Degrees." How he considered and estimated the difference between the churches of England and Rome, will be seen in the following passage from one of his sermons against popery, (mentioned above) page 52, shewing how reasonable and necessary the reformation was, and how justifiable our continued separation from the Romish church is. "My brethren, pardon the freedom of my speech. I should have thought it my duty to have separated from the church of Rome, had she pretended only to determine those things, which Christ has left indifferent: How much more, when she requires a compliance with those, which he hath expressly forbid? When she has the insolence to say, You shall not only confine yourself to a prescribed form of words, but you shall worship in an *unknown tongue*: You shall not only bow at the venerable name of our common Lord, but you shall worship an image: You shall not only kneel at the communion, but kneel in adoration of a piece of bread: You shall not only pronounce, or at least appear to pronounce, those accursed, who do not believe what is acknowledged to be incomprehensible, but those who do not believe what is most contrary to our reason and senses. When these are the terms of our continued communion, *the Lord judge between us and them!* Had nothing but indifferent things been in dispute, we should have done, as we do by our brethren of the church of England, taken our leave of them with decency and respect: We would have loved them as *our brethren*, while we could not have owned them as *our lords*. But when they require us to purchase our peace, by violating our consciences and endangering our souls, it is no wonder that we escape as for our lives: retiring, not as in the former case, from an inconvenient lodging, where we are straitened for want of room, but from a ruinous house, where we are in danger of being crushed to pieces; or rather, we retire with indignation and horror, as from *a den of thieves*, where we must be either the associates or the sacrifices of their wickedness. And to all their terrors and threatnings, we oppose the awful voice of God, *Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers*

of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities; Rev. xviii. 4, 5.

SECT. IV.

His Benevolence, Affability, public Spirit, and Liberality.

DR. DODDRIDGE was very much of the gentleman, understood the decorum of behaviour, and was solicitous to treat others with those forms of civility and complaisance, which are usual among well-bred people. "I know, saith he, that these things are mere trifles in themselves, but they are the outguards of humanity and friendship, and effectually prevent many a rude attack; which, taking its rise from some little circumstance, may nevertheless be attended with fatal consequences." The waspishness of some learned and good men, and the acrimony, with which they treat others whom they think their inferiors in knowledge and science, or who differ from them in sentiments, were very disagreeable to him. He had contracted nothing of that moroseness and distance, which persons of great reading, and those who are engaged in a constant hurry of business, are apt to discover in their converse, especially with their inferiors. There was nothing uncivil or forbidding in his behaviour; nothing overbearing or harsh in his language. He was easy of access to the poorest, when they came to him about their afflictions or religious concerns, and would leave his most favourite studies to hear their complaints, to counsel, comfort and pray with them; he treated them with tenderness, yet lessened not himself by unbecoming familiarity. He thought such a deportment peculiarly incumbent on the ministers of the gospel and the instructors of youth; out of regard to their general character, the influence of their example, and from a concern to lead all with whom they conversed, especially those under their care, to entertain a favourable opinion of their humility and readiness to serve them. In consequence of such an opinion, they will be more free in their conversation with them, especially in communicating their spiritual concerns, than they would be, if they saw them difficult of access or austere in their manner of conversing.

His temper was unsuspicious, mild and sweet; and *in his tongue was the law of kindness.* This, it must be owned, was sometimes carried to an excess; especially in younger life. His candour led him to think more favourably of some

persons than they deserved; particularly those who possessed some shining talents or qualities, especially if they appeared to be active for the advancement of religion. At the same time the openness of his temper, and a kind of natural complaisance, led him to say civil and obliging things of their characters and views: But in some instances he afterwards saw reason to alter his judgment of them, and be upon the reserve in his behaviour to them. This produced some inconveniences; for a few who did not know him, suspected his sincerity; and the persons in question thought themselves injured, by his declining an intimacy with them, or a recommendation of them, from which they expected some advantage. While those who were most intimately acquainted with his real character, and the motives on which he acted, knew him to be incapable of that dissimulation or inconsistency, with which he was charged. I mention this the rather, that it may serve as a caution to the good-natured reader, to restrain the excesses of civility and compliment; agreeably to the advice of a noble writer, "Be cautious in all declarations of friendship; as the very common forms of civility are too often explained into undesigned engagements*.

But the benevolence of the Doctor's temper was not shewn in word and tongue only, but in deed and in truth; and the effects of it were substantial, lovely and extensive. His zeal to do good to the souls of men, arising in part from this benevolent principle, hath already been mentioned. I am now to add, that his heart was touched with the miseries of the poor, and this led him to *devise liberal things*. No man was more free from a covetous spirit. He never sought great things for himself and his family, nor was ambitious to leave them rich in this world. He often quoted that saying of his Master, as a true and precious monument of apostolic tradition: *It is more blessed to give than to receive*. He enquired after and relieved distressed objects; pleaded the cause of the poor and needy in his sermons and private discourses, and used all his interest with his friends to induce them *to do good and to communicate*. But he never laid any burden of this kind upon others (if perhaps they might think it so) without bearing more of it himself, than, some may think, in justice to his family, he ought to have done. He exhorted others, agreeably to the directions of the New Testament, to appropriate some certain part and proportion of their estate and revenues to charitable uses; with a provisional increase, as God should prosper them in any ex-

* Lord Orrery's Life of Swift, p. 224.

traordinary instances. By this means they would always have a fund at hand; and probably communicate, when they looked upon what was so deposited, as not in any sense their own; but as already given away to such uses, though not yet affixed to particular objects. He exhorted christians to make a trial for one year, on such terms, as they thought in their consciences would be most pleasing to God; and by their observation on that, to fix their proportion for the next. He exhorted them to spare, to retrench superfluities, and deny themselves some of the elegancies of life; not that they might have more to hoard up, but have more to give*. And upon these maxims he acted himself.

In one of his annual reflections upon the providences of God to him, his views, resolutions, &c. he writes; "I have this day in secret devotion, made a vow, that I would consecrate a tenth part of my estate and income to charitable uses, and an eighth part of all that shall this year come in from my books to occasional contributions; unless any circumstances arise, which lead me to believe, that it will be injurious to others to do it." At the beginning of the following year he thus writes; "Having fully discharged the charitable account last year, I renew the like resolution for this; and desire to observe how God prospers me, that I may do in proportion to it." His accounts shew, how punctually he fulfilled this engagement, and that he often exceeded them: So that, considering his family, and the precariousness of most of his income, his liberality will appear very remarkable. He often lamented, that in his youth he had not been sufficiently frugal, so as to leave room for contributing more to relieve the necessities of others; though while he was at school and the academy, as he hath sometimes informed his pupils, he never contracted any debts, nor spent money in unnecessary articles. This he reckoned a piece of justice to his benefactors, and a preparatory discipline for appearing reputably, and maintaining good economy, when he entered upon public life; and though his income was small, he had always a little cash in hand at the close of every year. Yet he afterwards thought, he might have been more frugal, and thereby have had more to have done good with.

Besides the proportion he devoted to charitable uses, he was a *lover of hospitality*, entertained his brethren and friends with great respect and kindness, and supplied many necessitous persons and families. After a considerable legacy to the poor in his will, he

* Rise and Progress, ch. 28. § 10.

adds, I am persuaded, my dear family will not be upon the whole, the poorer for this little kindness to those, whom I hope they will consider as the friends of Christ, and will delight, as they can, in doing them good. I have thought it my duty to lay up but very little for my own children, while I have seen so many of the children of God, and some of them most excellent persons, in necessity." He had great compassion for the industrious poor, visited their families, enquired into their circumstances, and particularly, whether they had bibles and practical books; and he bestowed upon them, or endeavoured to procure for them, those which he judged most necessary and useful. He gave away a great number of his smaller pieces, among the poor of the town and neighbourhood where he lived, without distinction of parties.

He drew up, and printed at his own expence, "A friendly Letter to the Private Soldiers of a Regiment of Foot," which was one of those engaged in the important and glorious battle of Culloden, concerning the detestable vices of swearing and cursing, to which they were addicted. It is now printed with his other small pieces; and it is much to be wished, that officers, and other gentlemen of fortune would distribute it among soldiers with the same benevolent design.

Many wealthy persons, from a conviction of his integrity and prudence, and a desire to gratify his benevolent temper, put considerable sums into his hands for charitable purposes; and he kept a most faithful and circumstantial account, how that money was distributed. He was very active in setting on foot the county hospital at Northampton: He not only contributed generously to it himself, but spent much time (more valuable to him than money) in ripening that excellent design. He preached and printed a sermon in favour of it, in which he pleads its cause with forcible and insinuating arguments. He often reflected, with great satisfaction, on the pains he had taken to establish this charity, and the good effects he had seen of it; in relieving so many, who are the worthiest objects of charity, and promoting a social and catholic spirit among persons of different parties and persuasions, by their union in carrying on a benevolent design. It gave him particular pleasure to reflect, that the souls of the patients might be instructed, awakened and improved by the religious advantages, with which they were favoured in the hospital, while the cure of their bodily disorders was proceeding.

As a farther instance of his benevolence and public

spirit, I might mention the part he acted at the rebellion in 1745; exerting himself with great zeal and at considerable expence in the cause of his king and country. When a regiment was raising in Northamptonshire, to be under the command of the Earl of Halifax, he wrote many letters to his friends in that county and neighbourhood to excite their concurrence; he went about among his own people to encourage proper persons to enlist, and had the pleasure to find many of them cheerfully engaging in the design. To which I may add, that he took pains to cherish in his pupils a hearty loyalty and affection to his late majesty, who governed us in righteousness and peace; and embraced the many opportunities, which his lectures of civil and ecclesiastical history gave him for that purpose. Those who knew him best are fully convinced, that what he said on this subject, in his sermons on some public occasions, which were published, and the dedication of his Family Expositor to the Princess of Wales, was the genuine sentiment of his heart; and there was nothing inconsistent with it in any of his lectures or private discourses.

I have already taken notice of his establishing a charity-school at Northampton; to which I have now only to add, that he was a constant contributor to it, besides the pains he took to superintend and assist the education of the scholars. He educated several young men of good genius and dispositions for the ministry, in a great measure at his own expence; and had the satisfaction to see them entering upon the work with proper furniture and great acceptance; and to receive from them such grateful returns, as were in their power*.

But his generous heart was most open to encourage any schemes for propagating religion, and spreading the gospel among those, who were strangers to it. Here he led the way, and exerted all the force of persuasion to engage others to concur in them. Thus, writing to a friend, concerning his

* I will beg the reader's leave to mention, in this connection, a circumstance, which reflects great honour on the worthy person, to whom it refers. He had been educated for the ministry under the Doctor's tuition, by the assistance of some charitable donations; and, though strongly inclined to pursue it, was obliged, through an unconquerable excess of modesty and diffidence, to decline it, and turn his thoughts to trade. Having pursed his business with great diligence and economy, and a little increased his small capital, he thought himself bound in justice to return the money, which had been allotted to his education: Accordingly he sent his tutor a larger sum, than had been expended in his education; desiring him to employ it in the education of some young man for the ministry, who might need the assistance; which was done. An example, which perhaps many others ought to follow, if their circumstances will admit; and especially those, who have been educated for the ministry and thought proper to decline it.

plan for propagating the gospel, he saith, "It is much better and more delightful to do a little for our Redeemer, than to do nothing. Who that considers, what a precious jewel he possesseth in that best of friends, would not wish, that all the world shared with him in it? What is our time, or what our money worth, but that some considerable part of both may be employed for him? O, when shall *his knowledge cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea*, and carry along with it richer treasures and blessings, than the sea ever bore! May it in the mean time rule in our hearts; and may we have the pleasure of wishing, praying and labouring for the spread of his kingdom, though we cannot advance it as we would!"

An event of a public, uncommon nature, in which he was particularly concerned, deserves to be related here, as an evidence of his great benevolence, and for the sake of the useful reflections he makes upon it. "April 5, 1741. At our assize last month, one Bryan Connell, an Irish papist, was convicted of the murder of Richard Brymley, of Weedon, about two years ago. The evidence against him at his trial seemed full and strong; but it chiefly depended on the credit of an infamous woman who owned she had lived with him in adultery some years. There were some remarkable circumstances in the course of the trial, in which I thought the providence of God wonderfully appeared. The prisoner told a long story of himself; but it was so ill supported, that I imagine, no one person in court believed it. I visited him after his conviction, with a compassionate view to his eternal concerns; but instead of being able, by any remonstrances, to persuade him to confess the fact, I found him fixed in a most resolute denial of it. He continued to deny it the next day with such solemn, calm, but earnest appeals to heaven, and fervent cries that God would inspire some with the belief of his innocence, that I was much impressed. As he desired to leave with me, at the time of his execution, a paper, in which he would give an account of the places where, and the persons with whom, he was, when the murder was committed, I was so struck with the affair, that I obtained time of the undersheriff to make enquiry into the truth of what he had told me. Having sent a wise and faithful friend to Whitchurch and Chester, to examine the evidence he appealed to, I found every circumstance which the convict had asserted, proved; and the concurrent testimony of five credible persons attested, that he was in Cheshire, when the murder was committed.

These testimonies I laid before the judge by whom he was condemned, for the deliverance of what in my conscience I believed, and do still believe, to be innocent blood. But the judge did not think himself warranted to reprieve him; as the evidence given against him by the wicked woman was materially confirmed by two other witnesses; and because he thought the most dangerous consequences might attend such an examination of the affair as I proposed. The convict was accordingly executed. I had laboured with unwearied pains and zeal, both for the deliverance of his life and the salvation of his soul. What made the case more affecting to me was, that nothing could be more tender than his expressions of gratitude, and nothing more chearful than his hope of deliverance had been. Among other things I remember he said, 'Every drop of my blood thanks you, for you have had compassion on every drop of it.' He wished he might, before he died, have leave to kneel at the threshold of my door to pray for me and mine; which indeed he did on his knees in the most earnest manner, as he was taking out to be executed. 'You,' saith he, 'are my redeemer in one sense (a poor, impotent redeemer!) and you have a right to me. If I live I am your property, and I will be a faithful subject.' The manner in which he spoke of what he promised himself from my friendship, if he had been spared, was exceeding natural and touching.

"Upon the whole, I never passed through a more striking scene. I desire it may teach me the following lessons: 1. To adore the awful justice of God in causing this unhappy creature thus infamously to fall by her, with whom he had so scandalously sinned, to the ruin of a very loving and virtuous wife. Thus God made his own law effectual, that the adulterer should die. 2. To acknowledge the depths of the divine counsels; which in this affair, when I think on all the circumstances of it, are to me impenetrable. 3. To continue resolute in well-doing, though I should be, as in this instance I have been, reproached and reviled for it. Some have said, that I am an Irish papist; others have used very contemptuous language, and thrown out base censures for my interposing in this affair; though I am in my conscience persuaded, that to have neglected that interposition, in the view I then had of things, would have been the most criminal part in my whole life. 4. May I not learn from it gratitude to him, who hath redeemed and delivered me? In which alas! how far short do I fall of this poor creature! How eagerly

did he receive the news of a reprieve for a few days! How tenderly did he express his gratitude; that he should be mine; that I might do what I pleased with him; that I had bought him; spoke of the delight with which he should see and serve me; that he would come once a year from one end of the kingdom to the other to see and thank me, and should be glad never to go out of my sight. O, why do not our hearts overflow with such sentiments on an occasion infinitely greater! We were all dead men. Execution would soon have been done upon us: But *Christ has redeemed us to God with his blood.* We are not merely reprieved but pardoned; not merely pardoned but adopted; made heirs of eternal glory and near the borders of it. In consequence of all this, we *are not our own*, but *bought with a price.* May we *glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his!*"

There was no instance, in which the benevolence of his temper appeared in a more striking light, than in the tenderness and affection, with which he sympathized with others, and especially his friends, under their distresses. His heart felt for them: He entered into their sorrows, bore their burdens, and was ever ready to assist and relieve them to the utmost of his power; and, where the case admitted of no other relief, to support and comfort them. As a specimen of this, I will add a letter which, in the year 1724, he wrote to a lady on the death of her brother, who was a pious, useful minister; and I hope it will be serviceable to others in the like circumstance of distress.——"My heart is so full of the thought of your dear brother's death, that I know not how to command my pen to any other subject. Believe me, Madam, I see that heavy affliction in many of its most aggravated circumstances. But need I mention them to you, who have, no doubt, a much tenderer sense of them? Or need I mention those common consolations, which christianity affords us under all our calamities, or those, which the circumstances of the case before us do most peculiarly admit? I know you have already given them their weight, and are well furnished with consolations upon this head; having been obliged, by such afflictions, frequently to have recourse to them. No doubt, you have often been thinking, that as we are christians, we are not to be so much concerned about the different kinds of providential dispensations, which we are now exercised with, whether of a prosperous or a calamitous nature, as about the correspondency of our behaviour to them.

The law of christianity, not to say of nature itself, requires that we should not only be silent and composed, but chearful and thankful under our afflictions. This indeed is what the generality of christians are wanting in; but that is no proof, that it is an irrational or impossible demand, but rather a sublime attainment in religion. It is evident that nothing can be more grateful to God, and edifying to the world, than to see, that a christian, under the heavy pressure of calamity, can not only restrain the excess of sorrow and suppress those indecent complaints, which the corruption of nature would be too ready to suggest, but can mingle praises with his tears, and love and rejoice in, his heavenly father, even when he feels the smart of his correcting rod. Let me suggest a few hints upon this head, which you will easily enlarge upon in your own thoughts to greater advantage.

"God hath seen fit to take away your brother; and is not this a proper season to be thankful, that you so long enjoyed him? No doubt, you have been thinking of his character in the most advantageous particulars of it; and perhaps have considered it as a great aggravation of your affliction, that you have lost so excellent a brother. But may you not now press in each of these afflicting thoughts to subserve the purposes of thankfulness and joy? Do you not reflect, that the more excellent he was, the more surprising was the goodness of God in bestowing him upon you and continuing him so long to you? When you say, it may be with tears in your eyes, 'How few are there in the world that could have sustained such a loss!' What is it but to say in other words, how few are there in the world, on whom God ever bestowed so valuable a friend, as he gave to me? Let common sense judge, whether that be matter of complaint or praise.—You should be thankful to God, that for so many years you had a constant share in his prayers. The more religious he was, the more frequently and earnestly he prayed, and the more favourably did God regard him. No doubt but his prayers are still in remembrance before God; and as he most frequently asked those blessings for you, which are of the most excellent and permanent nature, much of the good effect of these addresses may be still behind. You know not how many refreshing visits of his grace, how many favourable interpositions of his providence, how high a degree of holiness in this world and of happiness in the next, God may now be preparing to bestow upon you, in answer to the prayers of this excellent man.—Once more, let the providence of God in removing your brother be improved to a more thankful sense of his goodness in continuing your surviving brother, whose lot is cast so much nearer to you

If you take the matter in this view, it brings your passions to a balance: for you can never imagine, that we are to lament any degree of affliction in a greater proportion than we rejoice in an equal degree of comfort.

"You see, Madam, you have cause of thankfulness, though your brother be dead; and that many of the considerations, with which you feed your sorrows, are capable of being made subservient to the nobler exercises of gratitude and love. But what if I should advance still further, and say, that the death of your brother should not only allow you to be thankful for your other mercies, but itself should be made the matter of praise? I think I should say no more than the apostle hath said, when he exhorts us, *in every thing to give thanks:* Nay I should say no more, than I am confident, your deliberate reason must subscribe to. Are you not the servant of God, and have you not yielded yourself to him? Was it not the business of the last sacrament-day? And are you not renewing the dedication every day of your life? When you consecrate yourself to God, you give up every separate interest of your own; and resolve all into this one great petition, that *his name may be glorified*, particularly in all you are and all you have. Now, do you imagine, that God would have removed so eminent a saint, so useful a minister, and afflicted a numerous and religious family, as well as a multitude of sympathizing friends, if he had not known that it was for his glory? When you have been saying, as you have daily said, *Father, thy will be done*, were you not then praying for the loss of your dearest comforts, even for the death of your brother, and of every other friend you have, upon supposition that it were the will of God? You certainly were; unless you meant to say, Let thy will be done, so far as it is agreeable to my own. Now I leave you to judge, whether the answer of prayer be the matter of complaint or of praise. I know it is very difficult to apprehend, how such a dispensation as this should be for the glory of God. But have we known so little of the nature of the great God, as to question the wisdom of his providential dispensations, merely because they appear unaccountable to us? We use ourselves to a contracted way of thinking and reasoning upon this head; much like a small congregation in the country, that fancy the interest of religion is very much damaged, by the removal of a useful minister from them, though it be to a sphere of much more extensive service. Because this earth is our habitation, we fondly imagine it to be a place of very great importance; whereas if we consider the number and excellency of the inhabitants of heaven, we must be forced to confess, that it is very probable,

those revolutions may be very serviceable to the whole creation, which are detrimental to some particular part, in its highest and most important interest. And of this nature, I take the removal of excellent ministers to be; especially in the prime of their strength and usefulness.

"I may add, that there are certain views both with relation to him and yourself, which will further evince your obligations to thankfulness. With regard to your brother, you easily apprehend a foundation for thankfulness, though perhaps you have not considered his present happiness in that particular view. You believe, with the greatest reason, that death was inconceivably advantageous to him, and that now he is *absent from the body*, he is *present with the Lord*. Now, with all your tender friendship, can you question, whether it be your part to rejoice with him in that glory and felicity, which he now enjoys? Or, can you imagine, that you are to be so much concerned that he is not with you, as to forget to rejoice that he is with God? Was it more for you to lose a brother, than for the apostles to part with Christ himself? And yet he says the very same thing, which shocked you so much a few lines above; *if ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I go to the Father.* When your brother was alive, you did not only take pleasure in him, when he was in the same house and room with yourself, but at the distance of above a hundred miles. You rejoiced to think that he was well; and that he was surrounded with agreeable friends, furnished with plentiful accommodations; and, above all, laying himself out with vigour and success in the service of our great common Master. And will you entertain so mean an idea of the preparation, which the God of heaven and earth has made for the supreme happiness of his beloved children, as to question, whether he be now raised to more valuable friends, more delightful entertainment and a sphere of more extensive service? I am confident, madam, you would have been thankful from your heart for your brother's recovery: And would it have been a greater mercy to him, to have been raised from a languishing illness, to a state of confirmed health, amidst the vanity and misery of this state of mortality, than to be exalted to immortal health and vigour, amidst the entertainment of angels, and the enjoyment of God? Or has so generous spirited a person as yourself begun now to imagine, that you are to be thankful on the account of none but yourself? So far from that, you think it a great matter of thankfulness, and no doubt you are frequently praising God for it, that you have an excellent brother left, so agreeably settled, so

universally respected, and so zealously and successfully engaged in the most honourable service. But is it not more, that you have another brother among the blessed angels in heaven? How different are the services, which the one is paying to the throne of grace and the other to the throne of glory! When they are both engaged, it may be at the very same moment, in the contemplation of God and divine things, how vastly do you think the younger brother has now the advantage of the elder? May there not be the same difference in accuracy, solidity and manly pleasure between the thoughts of the blessed saint in heaven and the philosopher upon earth, as between the sublimest thoughts of that philosopher, and the roving imagination of a little infant, in which reason is but just beginning to dawn? Certainly it should be a constant source of delight to us, amidst all the disturbances and calamities of life, that we have so many friends in heaven, whose joy and glory should be to us as our own.

"You must now give me leave to add, that you have reason to be thankful for this dispensation of providence, not only from a principle of zeal for God and friendship to your brother; but from a regard to your own personal interest. The gospel teacheth its sincere professors to regard every providence as a mercy, when it tells them, that *all things shall work together for good to them that love God:* And therefore though you could not see mercy in this particular stroke, religion would nevertheless require you to believe and acknowledge it. But cannot you yourself perceive some mercy in it? Has it not, as you are pleased to intimate in your letter, an apparent tendency to wean your affections from this world, and to raise them to the heavenly felicity? Do you not find the thoughts of death more tolerable, more delightful to you, since God has removed so powerful an attractive from earth, and translated it to heaven? Nay, do you not find it a considerable exercise of patience to be absent, it may be for several years from this dear, happy brother, whose image continually presents itself to your mind in so much the more charming a light, as your heart is melted with grief for his death? Now, if indifference to this world, and a most affectionate desire of a happy immortality, be a very important branch of the christian temper; if the scriptures are so frequently inculcating it upon us, and we so continually praying for the increase and lamenting the deficiency of it, how reasonable is it that we should be thankful for those providences, which, of all others, have the greatest tendency to promote it?—I write these things,

Madam, not with the coldness of a stranger, but with the tender sympathy of a friend, and with so much the greater sympathy, as, since I began this letter, I have lost a very agreeable and valuable person out of my congregation, with some circumstances, which render the stroke peculiarly surprising and afflicting. May God teach us so to bear and improve all our afflictions, both in ourselves and our friends, that we may have reason to reflect upon them, as the most valuable mercies of our lives; and that they may fit us for that happy world, where we shall be above the need, and then, undoubtedly, above the reach of them."

SECT. V.

His Humility and Dependence on divine Assistances.

DR. DODDRIDGE, with all his furniture, esteem and success, was truly humble. He thought, to use his own words, "the love of popular applause a meanness, which a philosophy, far inferior to that of our divine Master, might teach men to conquer. But to be esteemed by eminently great and good men, to whom we are intimately known, is not only one of the most solid attestations of some real worth, but, next to the approbation of God and our own consciences, one of its most valuable rewards*." This happiness he enjoyed. He was solicitous to secure the esteem of others, out of regard to his usefulness in the world; and this he sought, not by destroying or disparaging the reputation of others; nor by any sinful or mean compliances, but by a friendly, condescending behaviour to all, and faithful endeavours to serve them. He disliked the temper of those, who indulged their own humour and pursued their own schemes, without caring what the world said or thought of them. He reckoned this an affront to mankind, and such an evidence of pride, as not only defeated the ends they intended to answer, but exposed them to general contempt. A sensible writer hath so well expressed what I know were his sentiments on this head, and which he often inculcated upon his pupils, that I shall insert his words. "Reputation is in fact the great instrument, by which a man is capable of receiving any good from the world, or doing any good in it. His most generous, tenderest designs will be censured, his best actions suspected, his most friendly advices and gentlest reproofs misconstrued and slighted, unless his person be esteemed and his

* Rise and Progress, Ded.

character reverenced. So valuable a property then, as a good name, may well deserve to be guarded with care. Nay, we may surely be allowed to seek for eminent degrees of regard from those about us, in order to be of more eminent advantage to them. This consideration pleads with peculiar force, for a degree of tenderness and even jealousy of reputation in those, who are the *salt of the earth.* Much regard must be paid by them to the sentiments; some, even to the prejudices of those, that they have to do with*. These maxims Dr. Doddridge endeavoured to keep in his view; and there were few persons, in his station, who enjoyed so great a share of the public esteem, and whose writings were in so much reputation; and therefore few, in whom some degree of self-complacence might have been more easily excused.

The desire of extending his usefulness, falling in with the natural courteousness of his temper, might perhaps incline him to set too high a value upon the good opinion of the world in general, and render him too solicitous to obtain it. It is hard even for a wise and good man always to distinguish between a desire of popularity on its own account, and that concern about his reputation, and the acceptableness of what he offers to the public, which is necessary to render him serviceable to it: And while he thinks he is only influenced by the latter of these principles, he may, unawares to himself, be in some degree under the power of the former. How far this was the case with Dr. Doddridge, it is impossible for any one to say, unless he could have looked into his breast, and seen the secret springs of his actions. I am fully persuaded, that the grand and governing principles, on which he acted, were those of the noblest kind; and that no desire of popularity or applause could influence him in any case, in which he thought the interest of truth or religion concerned. These he always held sacred, and, compared with these, he considered even reputation and esteem as of no account. This I may venture to assert, from a long and intimate acquaintance with him; and from a view of his private papers, in which he lays open, with the greatest impartiality, all that passed in his own mind upon a variety of occasions. In them the secret springs of his actions do, in effect, appear; and from them it is evident, that the esteem of the world, instead of elating his mind, produced deeper humiliation before God, and higher admiration of divine favour and grace manifested to him. I find him, in some hints of his devout reflec-

* Fothergill's Sermons, No. X.

tions and exercises in secret, often bewailing his negligence, mispence of time, and how little he had done for God, in comparison with what he should and might have done; and expressing the greatest self-abasement, in acknowledging some instances of respect and success, which God had given him. "June 26, 1728, It grieves me, saith he, and fills me with remorse, to think, that a creature born in a christian country and a pious family, furnished with capacities and endowments for considerable service, early devoted to God, not only by the action of its parents, but its own solemn engagements; a creature taken care of by God in so remarkable a manner, when forsaken by earthly parents; visited with continual instances of goodness; blessed with health, though of a weak constitution; surrounded with plenty, though without any certain subsistence; beloved and esteemed by friends, notwithstanding much perverseness to forfeit their regards; a creature employed in the public services of the ministry; and pursuing it often with the appearances of the warmest zeal for God, and the tenderest compassion for souls; should after all behave in so unworthy a manner as I have done. It confounds me to think how often I have forgotten God, and dealt falsely in his covenant; to reflect on the formality of my devotions, the mispence of my time, and the indulgence of irregular passions. I confess my guilt and unworthiness before God, and humbly cast myself on his forgiving grace, and on the powerful mediation of my blessed Redeemer, as the only things which can give me a foundation of hope."

"I thank you," saith he, in a letter to a friend, "for your congratulation on the acceptance of my book on the Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul. I have had accounts from several of my friends of its being the instrument of converting and edifying many. But I bless God, I have not found my heart inwardly exalted on this occasion; but rather deeply and affectionately humbled before him, under this instance of his goodness to an unworthy sinner, as I know myself to be; and a weak ignorant creature, who every day sees the very narrow limits of his own understanding, and his great want of furniture of every kind, adequate to the station, in which I am fixed. The great favour he shewed me in my late sickness, in the extraordinary comfort which he gave me in my soul, and that steady joyful view of heaven, amidst all the agitation of the most painful disease, did really operate to humble me deeply in his presence. And I think if ever I have been enabled to bring the glory of any thing in me, or done by me, to the foot of the throne and leave it there, it has most sensibly been the case with

respect to this book. And this I say without affectation, and to you as my endeared friend, to whom I can most affectionately open my heart without reserve."

To another of his friends he thus writes, "I have just been explaining, and I have great need of using, the publican's prayer, *God be merciful to me a sinner;* to me an unprofitable servant, who have deserved long since to have been cast out of his family. You talk of my strength and usefulness; Alas! I am weak and unstable as water. My frequent deadness and coldness in religion sometimes presseth me down to the dust. And, methinks, it is best when it doth so. How could I bear to look up to heaven, were it not for the righteousness and blood of a Redeemer? I have been reading the life of the excellent Mr. Brainerd; and it has greatly humbled and quickened me, pray for me, that God may fill my soul with his presence; that Christ may live and reign in my heart, and that love to him and zeal for him may swallow up every other passion; that I may have more confirmed resolutions for that best of masters; of whom, when I get a lively view, I know not how to have done thinking or speaking of him."

He had a deep sense of the weight of his undertakings, and the necessity of divine assistance to strengthen him for his labours and make them successful. "I hope, saith he, I can truly say, my God is exciting in my heart some growing zeal for his service, both as a minister and a tutor. But really a sense of the vast weight of these offices, when united, is sometimes more than I know how to bear. It is of such infinite importance, that young ministers come out in the spirit of the gospel, which is humility, simplicity, love, zeal, devotion and diligence, in a degree far beyond what is commonly seen; and it is so difficult to bring them to it and keep them in it, through the pride and folly of the human heart, that sometimes I am almost ready to sink under the discouraging scene.——I hope God will keep me under a constant sense of my own imperfections; and, if he calls me out to any particular services, shew his strength in weakness and his grace in unworthiness. I know, that with regard to academical and ministerial labours, all depends on the increase, which God is pleased to give. He has taught me this by briars and thorns, though I thought I was sensible of it before. He has shewed me by some painful instances, how precarious the most promising hopes are; that I may trust, not in myself, nor in man, but in his grace in Christ Jesus, on which I desire to live more and more

myself, and to which I would daily recommend my pupils, my children and all my friends."

I am sensible, that some may be apt to think, that such very humbling expressions, when used by a person in his letters to his friends, savour too much of an affectation of humility, which, it must be owned, is widely different from the thing itself. But when it is considered, that the same language is used by him in those papers, which he intended only for his own perusal, and which relate to what passed between God and his own soul, I hope the candid reader will see no reason to doubt, but they both alike expressed his real sentiments.

While he had a deep sense of his own defects, he was disposed to do full justice to the abilities and good qualities of others. When he heard of the piety and zeal of other ministers and tutors, it gave him pleasure: He heartily rejoiced in their success and gave God thanks for it. I find notice taken of some such instances in his Devotional Exercises. In a letter to one of his brethren, he writes; "Methinks, I envy the happiness of those faithful servants of Christ, who, through many labours and dangers, are spreading his name; and I would fain have some fellowship with them in their labours of love. How much do we owe to that kind providence, which has also assigned a province of service to us; and no narrow or inconsiderable sphere! Let us take courage: His spirit does not move upon our hearts in vain. It is not given to grieve and afflict, by raising unsuccessful desires; but it is an earnest, that he will work mightily by us, in proportion to the degree in which he works upon us. May God give me more of this spirit; for sure I am, there is not a day, in which I have not reason to lie in the dust before him, as a guilty creature, as a slothful, and, in many instances, an unprofitable servant. I bless God I do feel something of a growing zeal in this best of causes, and have seen some instances of the success of my ministry, though but few. Perhaps God may remove me in the midst of life and services, and cause the interest of religion, here and elsewhere, to flourish much more after my death, than it has ever done in my life; and give those, who may most lament me, abundantly more edification, by those who may succeed me, as a minister or a tutor, than they ever had during my life and labours. And I heartily pray, that if he does so remove me, this may be the happy consequence. I hope, I can truly say, I shall be glad to be forgotten in the much superior services of my suc-

cessors. I would live and die *striving for the faith of the gospel*, for the conversion of souls, for the good of my friends, my neighbours, my countrymen, and the whole world. This joy no man shall take from me, while God continues to pour forth upon an unworthy creature that spirit of love, which, through his astonishing grace to me, I feel."

I may mention, as an evidence of his humility, his behaviour to his pupils, as above described; particularly his readiness to hear any objections they had to make to his sentiments, as expressed in his lectures; and his freedom from a dogmatical, imperious, overbearing spirit, for which he was very remarkable, and which seems to me a very essential part of humility; especially in a learned man and a teacher; as the contrary is the very essence of pride. In this light also must be considered, his relating to his pupils his own juvenile indiscretions, both in his compositions, and conduct, as a caution to them. Yea, so great was his humility, that he desired his friends, the elders of his church, and even his pupils, freely to inform him, what they thought amiss in his conduct; and he thankfully accepted their admonitions: Being sensible that amidst the variety of his cares, some important business might be neglected, or have too little of his time; some errors might escape his notice, and some irregularities of temper be indulged, which he would be glad to rectify. Patience of reproof is certainly a branch of humility and a very important one; and this he discovered. When he had once received an admonition from a faithful friend, he thus writes to him; "I do such justice to your experienced friendship, that you need not give yourself the trouble of gilding a reproof or caution, but may advance it in the plainest terms and with the utmost freedom. For indeed, I know I have many faults, and I think it one of the greatest felicities of life to be put into a way of correcting any of them: And when a friend attempts this, I place it to the account of the greatest obligations; even though, on the strictest examination, I should apprehend, that some mistaken view of things had been the immediate occasion of such a generous and self-denying office of friendship." As a stronger evidence that he was possessed of this amiable temper, I would add, that in one of his diaries, there is an account of an admonition he had received from a friend, concerning an improper gesture in his public prayers, which seemed to denote a want of a due reverence for God: Upon which he writes; "I would engrave this admonition upon my heart. May it not be owing to

the want of that habitual reverence for God, which I ought to feel in my own mind? I desire to be very thankful for so seasonable a reproof; resolving by divine assistance to lay it seriously to heart and examine myself for the future, in some special regard to it." Such was the strong sense this excellent man expressed of his own weakness, imperfections and defects; at the same time that some, who knew him most intimately, were ready to admire the zeal, activity, and success, with which he exerted himself in his master's work. In him was eminently fulfilled that saying of our Lord, *He that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.*

SECT. VI.

His Patience, Serenity and Chearfulness under Afflictions, and upon what Principles these Graces were exercised and supported.

IN all ages God hath been pleased to visit those with afflictions, who have been dearest to him, and most active in serving him. By purging and pruning the branches, which bring forth fruit, he hath enabled them *to bring forth more fruit.* This was the case with Dr. Doddridge; and we are now to see how his heart was affected with his afflictions, how he was supported under them, and improved by them.

His health was not often interrupted so as to render him incapable of business; and he frequently recorded and devoutly acknowledged the goodness of God in this respect. But he was visited with some threatning fevers, which might have been prevented, or sooner removed, had he taken due precautions in time. But the ardour of his spirit in his master's work made him too much disregard the body; and, as he found some public services gave him a present flow and chearfulness of spirits, he did not sufficiently consider, how much his health might be impaired, and beginning disorders increased by neglecting a timely recess from business, and the use of proper remedies. He once lay long under a violent fever, which gave his family and friends many painful fears. But he bore the affliction with great patience; and, as soon as he was able to write, gave an intimate friend an account of his recovery; to which he added, "It is impossible to express the support and comfort, which God gave me on my sick bed. His promises were my continual feast. They seemed, as it were, to be all united in one stream of glory, and poured into my heart. When I thought of dying, it sometimes made my very heart to leap within me, to think, that I

was going home to my Father and my *Saviour, to an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect.* Animal nature was more than once in great commotion; my imagination, just at the height of the fever, hurried in the strangest manner I ever knew. Yet even then, Satan was not permitted to suggest one single fear with regard to my eternal state. I can never be sufficiently thankful for this. Assist me in praising God upon this account. O, may I *come out of the furnace like gold!*" Speaking of another illness some months after, he saith, "I did not experience so much of the presence of God in this illness, as I did in the former; but I bless God, I have not been left either to dejection or impatience." Concerning another he saith, "I have been confined of late by a threatning disorder; but I thank God, through the prayers of my friends and a blessing upon the use of means, I am now well. Assist me in acknowledging the divine goodness. He hath filled my soul with joy by *the light of his countenance*, and given me, I hope, more and more to rise above every thing selfish and temporal, that my soul may fix on what is divine and immortal. The great grief of my heart is, that I can do no more for him. O, that my zeal may increase; that I may know how, on every occasion, to think and speak and act for God in Christ, and may spend all the remainder of my days and hours upon earth, in what may have the most direct tendency to people heaven. I am so crouded with cares, that they almost bear me down; yet if they may but be cares for God, they are welcome."

He had much affliction in the sicknesses and other distresses of his friends and near relations, with whom he affectionately sympathized and for whom he earnestly prayed. He thus expresseth himself to a friend, concerning the dangerous illness of his wife and the anxiety he had upon her account; "I bless God, my *mind is kept in perfect peace*, and sweet harmony of resignation to so wise and gracious a will. And indeed, the less will we have of our own for any thing but to please him, the more comfort we shall find in whatever circumstances he is pleased to allot us. Self-denial, mortification and taking up the cross, giving up our own schemes, and being sometimes censured and condemned, even for things in themselves right, and, in the circumstances in which they were done, requisite, is a very wholesome part of discipline. Though this be sometimes distasteful food, the soul often thrives by it, as I hope I have in many instances found." Upon another afflictive occasion, he thus expresseth himself; "I am ready to resign my agreeable circumstances, and to come, if such were the will of my Lord, to bread and water and

to a dungeon, if his name may but be glorified by it; provided he will but look through the gloom and chear me with the light of his countenance. Yea, I am willing to submit in the midst of inward as well as outward darkness, if his name may but be glorified. And when I feel this, as, I bless God, at some times I do, then a living fountain of consolation springs up in my soul, and the waters of life do, as it were, overflow me."—His heart was so affectionate and tender, that the death of some of his brethren in the ministry, his friends in private life, and his pupils, wounded him deeply.

In his reflections on one of his birth-days he thus writes; "Most awful things God hath shewed me since the last birth-day; such as all the years of my life can hardly equal: The death of four such valuable friends, that I question, whether the whole sum of my remaining comforts could, all things considered, furnish out such another field of slaughter. My hands are indeed weak this day, and have long been so. How soon he may add me to the number of my fathers and brethren, he only knows. I thankfully own, that I am not solicitous about it. I trust, through his grace, that I have in the sincerity of my soul devoted myself and my labours to him. Him do I honour and love above all; and it is the joy of my heart to *serve him with my spirit in the gospel of his Son.* I hereby leave it under my hand before him, that I am his property; that I have no greater ambition than to be disposed of by him; to be silent till he commands me to speak; to watch his eye and hand for every intimation of his will, and to do it, and bear it, as far as my little strength will carry me; waiting upon him for further strength in proportion to renewed difficulties: and all my interests and concerns I do most cordially lodge in his hands, and leave myself and them to his wise and gracious disposal."—In one of his reflections on the frame of his spirit in the services of a sacrament day, he writes; "This day my heart hath been almost torn in pieces with sorrow; yet, blessed be God, not a hopeless, not a repining sorrow; but so softened and so sweetened, that, with all its distress, I number it among the best days of my life; if that be good which teacheth us faith and love, and which cherisheth the sentiments of piety and benevolence. I desire very thankfully to acknowledge, that days of the sharpest trial have often been days of singular comfort. The repeated views I have had of a dear dying friend, who is expressing so much of the divine presence and love, have comforted rather than dejected me. Blessed be God, who hath sealed us both with his grace, as those that are to

be companions in eternal glory! A thought which now hath a relish, that nothing can exceed, nothing can equal."

In a letter to one of his pupils, concerning the joy and triumph with which one of his friends had died, he saith; "O, what a gospel is this! *I protest by our rejoicing in Christ Jesus,* that I see and feel more and more of its excellency; that I esteem it the greatest madness in the world to oppose it, and next to that, to neglect it. Who would not rejoice in that gospel, which is such a cordial to the soul, when every thing else loseth its relish? Who would not delight to preach it, and adore that gracious hand, which imparts the consolations of it to our companions in the ways of religion, when their flesh and heart faileth? Thus, do I hope he will comfort us, when we are capable of labouring no longer for him; and convey us into a blissful eternity under his sensible smiles: but if not, we know whom we have believed, and the surprise of glory will be but so much the greater." At another time he thus writes; "Such things have lately befallen me in the death of some friends and the removal of others to a distance, that had I not been peculiarly supported, I know not how I should have borne them; but, through the undeserved goodness of a gracious God, I have found very great consolation. The divine presence hath made my work my joy amidst all its fatigues, and hath caused my soul to overflow with such unutterable delight, that I have hardly known how to quit it. Other things, that used to be pleasant, have been painful to me, as separating me from that delightful intercourse with God through Christ, which I have known in prayer, meditation and reading devotional pieces. It hath been like a fire glowing in my heart; so that I could scarce forbear speaking to every one I met with, about their souls and divine things; and have longed for opportunities, both in public and private, of imparting the fulness of what I felt within."

But there was no affliction which lay with greater weight upon his mind, than the death of his eldest daughter, who lived long enough to give him very agreeable hopes as to her pious disposition.* In the sermon he published on that occasion, the world hath seen how his heart was affected, and what considerations supported him under that affliction; and many mourning parents have been comforted and instructed by the arguments and consolations he hath suggested

* A very amiable and hopeful child of nearly five years of age.—K.

in it.* I wish such may reap a like advantage from viewing some of the workings of his heart in secret, which he recorded at once for his humiliation and thankfulness: And then my design will be answered; though others, who are strangers to the tender feelings of nature on such an occasion, may be unimpressed with his reflections. "I have been preaching from those words, *It is well with the child? And she answered, It is well.* But surely, there never was any dispensation of providence, in which I found it so difficult to say it. Indeed some hard thoughts of God were ready to arise; and the apprehension of his displeasure against me brought my mind into a painful situation. But it pleased God to quiet it, and lead me to a silent, cordial submission to his will. I see that I doted too much upon her; my heart was opened to her with a fond flattering delight. And now, O my soul, one of thy earthly delights is gone. Seek thy greatest delight in heaven, where I trust my child is; where I am sure my Saviour is; and where I trust, through grace, notwithstanding some irregularities of heart on this occasion, I shall shortly be. This circumstance I must record, that I recollected this day, at the Lord's table, that I had some time ago taken the cup at that ordinance with these words, 'Lord, I take this cup as a public, solemn token, that, having received so inestimable a blessing as this, I will refuse no other cup, which thou shalt put into my hands.' I mentioned this again to day, and publicly charged the thought on myself, and christian friends who were present. God hath taken me at my word, but I do not retract it. I repeat it again with regard to every future cup. Much sweetness is mingled with this bitter portion, chiefly in the views and hopes of the eternal world. May not this be the beauty of this providence, that instead of her living many years upon earth, God may have taken her away, that I may be better fitted for and reconciled to, my own dissolution, perhaps nearly approaching? Lord, *thy will be done!* May my life be used for thy service, while it is continued, and then, put thou a period to it, whenever thou pleasest."

The next evening, after the funeral, he adds, "I have

* The sermon which he preached on this event, and which was published in 1736—7, is entitled "Submission to the Divine Providence on the Death of Children recommended and enforced." It is an admirable discourse which displays in a very strong and striking light the united piety and tenderness of the author's mind. Few superior instances of pathetic eloquence are to be met with in the English language.—K.

now been laying the delight of my eyes in the dust, and it is for ever hid from them. We had a suitable sermon from those words, *Dost thou well to be angry for the gourd?* God knows, that I am not angry; but sorrowful he surely allows me to be. Blessed Lord, I trust thou hast received my child, and pardoned the infirmities of her short, childish, afflicted life. I love those, who were kind to her, and those that weep with me for her: Shall I not much more love thee, who art at this moment taking care of her, and opening her infant faculties for the business and blessedness of heaven? Lord, I would consider myself as a dying creature. My first-born is laid in the dust; I shall shortly follow her, and we shall lie down together. But, O, how much pleasure doth it give me to hope, that my soul will rest with her, and rejoice in her for ever! But let me not centre my thoughts here: It is a rest with, and in, God, that is my ultimate hope. Lord, may thy grace secure it to me; and in the mean time give me a holy acquiescence of soul in thee; and now my gourd is withered, shelter me under the *shadow of thy wings.*"

Thus did this good man observe the hand of God in all the afflictive events, in which he was concerned; and so careful was he to improve every such occurrence, in order to strengthen his submission to the divine will, to weaken his attachment to the world and to increase his value for the supports and consoaltions of religion. And how happy an effect this had to render his trials easy, and to make them subservient to his spiritual improvement, will be easily imagined by every pious reader.

SECT. VII.

His Temper and Behaviour under unjust and unkind Treatment.

THE state of the world must be much altered for the better, and the malice of the accuser of the brethren and his influence upon mankind, much lessened in modern times, if a person who discovered so much piety, and zeal for the happiness of men, as Dr. Doddridge did, should pass through life without persecution; at least by those milder methods, which alone the lenity of our laws allows, but which the law of Christ absolutely condems. He knew the history of man and the state of the world too well, to expect the esteem and good word of all, even for the most upright and friendly intentions and attempts. He thought that the observation of St. Paul, that *all who will live godly in Christ*

Jesus, shall suffer persecution, was not to be confined to the primitive age, but was verified in the best of men in every age. He expected his share of this kind of trouble, as many of his fathers and brethren had theirs; and he prepared himself to receive and improve it with a christian temper. The following extract from a letter to a friend, will shew what were his sentiments on this head. "I settle it as an established point with me, that the more diligently and faithfully I serve Christ, the greater reproach, and the more injury I must expect. I have drank deep of the cup of slander and reproach of late; but I am in no wise discouraged: No, nor by, what is much harder to bear, the unsuccessfulness of my endeavours to mend this bad world. I consider it as my great care, to let my dear master (who hath bought me with his precious blood) see, that I have a grateful sense of his benefits, and that his name and cause lie near my heart. If the labours of many years, whether they do or do not succeed, may secure this, it is well. Nay indeed, in this case, *Labor ipse Voluptas*. I shall not be surprised if more afflictions come upon me: I need them all; and the cup is in the hand of my wise and gracious father; for that God is such, I assuredly know. Let us give diligence to seize every opportunity we have of serving his interest, in that of his son, while we are here; and then nothing in life or death needs much to move us."——The ill treatment he met with might have been passed over in silence, were it not so commonly the lot of the most active, useful men, and an affliction, which perhaps they find it more difficult to bear than any other. Some account of his sufferings of this kind, his reflections upon them and behaviour under them, may properly be given; as they illustrate his character, shew his *companions in the tribulation of Christ*, that their case is not singular, and may suggest to them the proper behaviour under it.

No sooner was he settled at Northampton, with the pleasing prospect of great usefulness, by his relation to so large a congregation and the increase of his academy, than he met with injurious treatment from his neighbours. Not to mention some insults which he and his family suffered from the vulgar, through the influence of a party-spirit, a more formidable attack was made upon him from another quarter, whence he expected more candour and moderation. A prosecution was commenced against him in the ecclesiastical court, by some dignataries of the church of England for teaching an academy. Persons of the best sense among different parties were surprised at this step;

and several gentlemen of the established church of considerable rank and in public characters, warmly declared their disapprobation of it. Nay, the very person, in whose name the prosecution was carried on, came to the Doctor to assure him of his abhorrence of it; and to know, before it commenced, whether he could with safety to himself, being then churchwarden, refuse to sign the presentment, or in any other way make the matter easy to him. But the clergy seemed determined to carry on the prosecution with vigour; notwithstanding many acknowledgments they made of his learning and moderation, and many compliments they personally paid him on that account. This gave him a painful alarm, lest his usefulness as a tutor should have been entirely prevented, or greatly lessened; or he should have been obliged to remove from his congregation to some other part of the kingdom, where he might have been out of the reach of his persecutors. But his loyal, peaceable and moderate principles and character, being fairly represented to his late majesty, by some persons of rank and influence, who had access to him and were well acquainted with the Doctor, a stop was, by his express order, put to the prosecution; agreeably to the noble and generous maxim he had laid down, that, "During his reign, there should be no persecution for conscience sake."

He met with injurious treatment from some, who denied the truth of christianity; which he could no other way account for, than from the zeal he had shewn in its defence: while others, on the contrary, were offended at the respect with which he had treated some persons, who were thought to make light of the gospel or deny some of its distinguishing tenets, because he saw in them some amiable qualities, esteemed them valuable members of society, or had commended their writings, as containing many things excellent and calculated for usefulness. But strange as it may seem, the worst treatment he received, and which continued longest, was from some of his brethren in the ministry; which I believe arose partly from hence, that he set them a pattern of diligence and activity, which they were not disposed to imitate*; but principally from

* "It hath been observed, that it is somewhat natural for clergymen, to be more easily irritable at such of their brethren, as rise above them, in apparent concern for religion and zeal for promoting it, than at those who fall below them. The first are a reproach to their own conduct and character; the other are a foil to it. So that every one, who espouses any bold or vigorous measure, may lay his account with a sensible coldness, even from such of his brethren as are in the next immediate degree below him." Dr. Witherspoon's Essays, v. ii. p. 254.

this circumstance, that he was not of their party, or would not run all their lengths in opposing and judging others. Many controversies concerning some christian doctrines, had been warmly agitated; and there had been several divisions in dissenting congregations arising from different sentiments about them. It is no wonder that each party should be solicitous to number a person of so much learning, piety and reputation, among their adherents. But he chose not to be distinguished by any party name, and to keep as clear as possible from any invidious distinction. He thought it his duty to go as far as he honestly could with both sides, and endeavour to bring them nearer to one another in christian affection, if he could not unite them in sentiments. He was desirous to *become all things to all men*, as far as, with a good conscience towards God, he could; to commend what was good in each party, and to keep up a friendship with the most valuable and moderate persons of it. He imagined himself fully justified in this conduct, by the behaviour of our blessed Lord and his apostles, and by the prudential and pacific maxims of the New Testament.

His sentiments on this head, as he hath published them to the world, deserve, in this connection, a peculiar regard. "When a fierce and haughty sense of liberty is the reigning, darling character of ministers, and a determination to submit in nothing, to oblige in nothing; as the first elements of the christian temper seem as yet to be unknown, there is great reason to believe, that the doctrines and precepts of the gospel will not, cannot, be successfully taught*."——Again, "Let none of us be disposed to dispute, merely for the sake of disputing; nor unnecessarily oppose the judgment and taste of our brethren, whether out of an affectation of singularity or spirit of contention; but let us rather labour, so far as with a safe conscience we can, *to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*. Let us avoid, as much as possible, a party spirit, and not be fond of listing ourselves under the name of this or that man, how wise, how good, how great soever. Neither Luther, nor Calvin, nor even Peter nor Paul were crucified for us, nor were we baptized into any of their names. Happy is he, who being himself an example of yielding, so far as he conscientiously can, and of not taking upon him to censure others, where he cannot yield to them, shall do his part towards cementing; in the bonds of holy love, all the children of God and the members of Christ. How unsuccessful soever his efforts may be, amidst that angry

* Family Expositor, Acts xvi. 3. Improvement.

and contentious, that ignorant and bigotted croud, who miscall themselves christians, or by whatever reproachful and suspicious names his moderation may be stigmatized, his divine Master will neither fail to consider it in its true light, nor to honour it with proportionable tokens of his acceptance and favour. Love is the first and greatest of his commandments; and after all the clamour, which hath been made about notions and forms, he who practiseth and teacheth love best, *shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven**." It may at first seem strange, that a person who professed, and, I am well persuaded, always acted agreeably to these sentiments, should be reproached; and the rather, as he was an avowed enemy to all pious frauds, as they have been called, and thought (to use his own words) "that they ought to be hissed out of the world with just abhorrence."

Those, who knew him, saw that he was neither fond of money nor power. He was not influenced by a worldly spirit; having refused much more considerable offers in the establishment, than ever could be made him among the dissenters. He was not rash, hasty and over-bearing, which leads many persons into an inconsistent and dishonourable conduct; and then into double-dealing to vindicate or palliate it. On the contrary, he acknowledged that he had sometimes been restrained from exerting himself, as he might have done, to serve the cause of religion, by an excess of caution, and a fearfulness of offending and incurring censure. This he intimates in these lively expressions in a familiar letter to a friend; "The apprehensions of wise and good men are so different, that I am sometimes confounded amidst the variety of their opinions and counsels; and often think of the grey-headed man and his two wives. But if I err, I would chuse to do it on the side of modesty and caution, as one who is more afraid of doing wrong, than of not doing right. But when the world is to be remarkably reformed, God will raise up some bolder spirits, who will work like your London fire-men; and I pray God it may not be amidst smoke and flames and ruin." He always treated others, even those from whom he differed, with civility, candour and tenderness; as appears from his writings, and equally from his private converse. It was therefore natural for him to expect, that he should escape unjust censures and opprobrious reflections from his brethren. But to a person, who knows the world, hath read any thing of the history of the church, or observed the nature

* Family Expositor, 1 Cor. i. 10. Improvement.

and effects of most religious controversies, it will not appear strange, that the most amiable virtue of moderation should be reckoned a great fault, and a care not to run the lengths of any party should expose a man to the resentment and censure both of that party and its opposite. "He found by dear experience (as Mr. Pope expresseth it) that he lived in an age, in which it was criminal to be moderate.*" Some charged him with being too loose in his sentiments; others with being too strict. "The high Calvinists (to use his own words) on this side, and some of the friends of liberty and catholicism, as by a strange catachresis they call themselves, on the other," censured him.

He was represented by the bigots on both sides as a trimmer and a double dealer. So have many of the greatest eminence for wisdom, holiness and zeal been represented; and he used to take comfort in this, that he was no worse treated, than those four excellent divines, whose writings, above all others, he admired, the Archbishops Leighton and Tillotson, Mr. Baxter and Dr. Watts. "I confess (saith the last of these) when a party spirit runs high among the different sects of religion, or the different divisions of mankind, this most amiable virtue of moderation is called by the scandalous names of indifference, lukewarmness or trimming; and it sustains a world of reproaches from both the quarrelling parties. Moderation, though it is the blessed principle which awakens and assists men to become *peace makers*, yet at the same time, when it enters into the battle to divide the contenders, it receives an unkind stroke from either side." Dr. Doddridge endeavoured to act up to that character, which his affectionate friend and fellow-sufferer had described in the same discourse. "When any sect of christians seems to be carried away with the furious torrent of some prevailing notions, or some unnecessary practices; some special superstition, or a contentious spirit, the moderate man tries to shew, how much of truth and goodness may be found among each party, where all agree to hold Christ Jesus, the head; though he dares not renounce a grain of truth or necessary duty for the sake of peace, and he would *contend earnestly*, where providence calls him, for the essential articles of *faith*, which were *once delivered to the saints*, &c.†" He saw and lamented the sad deviation of many ministers from, what he thought, important truths of

* Pope's Works, v. vii. p. 206. † Watts's Sermons, v. ii. s. 28.

the gospel; insisting upon them much less, than they should have done; or in such a manner, as if they were making concessions to an adversary, rather than opening their hearts to their hearers upon a favourite subject. He saw persons refining upon a plain gospel, till it was almost evaporated and lost; and therefore he was the more strenuous in the support of its vital truths. "I hope, (saith he, in a sermon before an assembly of ministers) we shall never practise so dangerous a complaisance to the unbelievers of the present age, as to wave the gospel, that we may accommodate ourselves to their taste; which if we do, we may indeed preserve the name of virtue, but I fear we shall destroy the thing itself; lose it in our congregations, and probably in our hearts too: for I confess it seems to me much more probable, that the doctrines of natural religion alone should be blessed, as the means of reforming heathens, who never heard of christianity, than that they should have much effect upon those, who, under the profession of it, slight its most glorious peculiarities; as if the religion of Jesus were a mere incumbrance, which, while we own it to be true, we might nevertheless forget, without great danger or much inconvenience."

In a letter to one of his younger brethren, he thus expresseth himself upon this subject; "Indeed the gospel is a great thing, or it is nothing. I am more and more convinced of the importance of keeping to the good old evangelical and experimental way of preaching; and look upon most of the new-fashioned divinity, of which some persons, in different extremes, are so fond, as a kind of quackery, which bodes ill to the health of the soul, and of the church in general. You know how cautious I am of troubling the church of Christ with disputes; but my faith in the doctrines I preach, is more and more confirmed by studying the scriptures, by experience and observation. What I have wrote concerning them proceeds not from any sourness of temper, or any want of charity for, or love to, persons of a different opinion; though some of them have, as you well know, laid me under strong temptations to it, by exercising as little charity towards me, as if there had been no common bond of christianity or even humanity to unite us."—For such a regard to the peculiar doctrines of the gospel in his preaching and writings he was much censured; and "neither his moderation and other personal virtues, nor all his zeal for the service of the common cause of chris-

tians, protestants or dissenters, could shelter him from the affected contempt and severe reproaches of some angry people, who, amidst all their professions of the most unbounded charity, thought his an excepted case, or chose rather to be injurious to him, than consistent with themselves.*" Many instances in which he was treated in this manner might be mentioned: but as I know he forgave them, I hope his friends, who were acquainted with them, have done the same. It will be more for the reader's edification, to see how he expressed himself on these occasions, both as to the foundation of the censures passed upon him, and the frame of his spirit under them, in some letters to his intimate friends, and in his own private reflections, of which I will give him a faithful extract.

One of his friends had informed him that he had been charged with insincerity; especially in using some particular phrases in his writings, in a sense different from that in which he himself understood them, in order to please a party. To this he answereth; "My conscience doth not tell me, that I am at all to blame on the head you mention. I write for the public (as I would also do in every private correspondence) as in the presence of God, and in the views of his judgment. I would not purchase that phantom, popularity, which is often owing to the very worst part of a man's character or performances, by any compliances beneath the dignity of a christian minister; an office, of which I think so highly, as to be deeply sensible how unworthy I am to bear it. On the other hand, I do indeed desire to give as little offence, as I honestly can; and I have high authorities for it: and though I am, and always declare that I am, in my judgment, greatly against the imposition of human phrases, yet, as some can hardly be avoided on one hand or the other, I chuse to adopt and use some that are ambiguous, in what I take to be a fair sense, though not the only sense they might bear; and by declaring it, to endeavour to fix a good idea to them, rather than absolutely to declare against, or even totally to disuse them. Others, wider by far in their sentiments than I, are indulged in this, and even applauded for it: I have the misfortune (I cannot use the word more properly) to be condemned.——I do indeed believe, that it is generally thought by that part of the world, which some in jest, and some in sober sadness,

* Sermons and Tracts.

are ready to charge with heretical pravity, that I approach much nearer to their sentiments, than I really do: and perhaps three causes have concurred to lead them into that apprehension. A general conceit, that their notions are so self-evident, that none but an extremely weak or ignorant man (which they pay me the compliment of supposing that I am not, though they afterwards fully balance the account) can possibly be of a different opinion. Some hints, which I may perhaps have dropped between the years 1723 and 1730 or thereabouts, when I was really more inclined to some of their sentiments than I now am; and—my hearing them assert some of them patiently in a mixed company, when I have not been in a humour to dispute.

"The friendly manner in which I have conversed with, and spoken of, some of those obnoxious gentlemen, and the honour I have done publicly and privately to those writings, in which I think they have deserved well of christianity in general, though I may have thought them allayed with some considerable mixture of error, may have conduced further to lead them to a conclusion, that I was much more of their mind, in some disputable cases, than I really am. My great care not to judge others and my using at different times, different phrases, which have appeared to me perfectly consistent, though others may have apprehended the contrary, may also have contributed to produce the same effect. But on the whole, I know assuredly, that I have not on any occasion belied the real sentiments of my heart; and that by my necessary caution on this head, I have lost many friends, whom I could easily have kept, and whom I speculatively knew the way of cementing to me, much to my own secular advantage; though I could not go to the price of it, when that price was only a few ambiguous words. This, Sir, may give you a general view of the matter; but if it occurs to you to mention any particular phrases and modes of expression, charged with the evils, of which this condescension is said to be productive, I shall open my heart about them with the utmost freedom; as I know nothing in my purposes or views, which I would not wish you thoroughly to understand; and if I cannot vindicate such phrases, I will for the future lay them aside. I speak upon this head, without any reserve or any regret, as a man that is inwardly easy, and being sound, can bear handling; and you are perfectly welcome to shew this letter to whom you please."

To another friend, who had informed him of some reports he had heard to the disadvantage of his character, he thus writes; "I wish every one, whose friendship is worth preserving, would

give me such an opportunity as you have done, of explaining myself freely, with regard to those things, which have been so unjustly aggravated. My righteousness is in it; and I am fully persuaded, that what I have done in the various circumstances, in which my conduct hath been arraigned, would be found at least the pardonable infirmities of an honest man, who fears God and loves all mankind; and who meant heartily well to the persons, who thought themselves most injured by him, in what he did, or did not do, in relation to them. It is a great comfort, that innocence can make its appeal to God, as St. Paul so often doth, when malice, or prejudice, or mistake, which last I believe more frequently to have been the case with regard to me, lays to its charge things, which he would not deliberately do to save his life. The reflections which have been thrown upon me, as a double-dealer and an inconsistent man, have often put me upon looking inward, and upon submitting myself to the scrutiny of the all-searching eye, in my most serious and solemn moments. I have, I thank God, a constant sense of the general uprightness of my heart before him; and can say, with that good man, of whose afflictions God hath caused me in this instance to partake, *Thou knowest that I am not wicked.*

"Religion is with me an inward thing; and if it were not, it could not have supported me, as it hath done, in the nearest views of the divine tribunal. Were my wordly interest the principle upon which I acted, I should have conformed long since and should do it immediately; and you are no stranger to some offers that have been made me. You know the warmth and tenderness of my temper, and how liable it is to strong impressions. You also know the great multiplicity of my affairs: the haste with which I am frequently obliged to write, without taking copies of my letters: and when these things come to be laid together, I cannot pretend to say, that I have always acted with that perfect consistency, which I could have wished. Perhaps few men can say it. My views of the same person, and of the same things, may also have altered. But upon the whole, so far as I can judge and recollect, I have generally given but very little cause for the reflections, which have been cast upon me; nor have I ever, in any instance, that I know of, acted a part, which my conscience hath condemned as insincere, or that it should afterwards on reflection upbraid me with, as dishonest. But I may, through an excessive tenderness of displeasing, have left men of different opinions more room to think me in their sentiments, by my not opposing them,

than I ought to have done. I may likewise in many instances have seen, or thought I have seen, things not to be inconsistent, which warm men on one side the question and the other, have thought to be so: and it is possible too, that in some of these cases, they may have thought right, though I believe in more, they have been on both sides wrong. I may have had more real esteem and love for persons in very different views and interests, than they (knowing the narrowness of their own hearts in these instances) could easily imagine to be sincere; and among these have been some of the methodists. Besides all which, a disposition to use some forms of complimental expressions, especially in younger life, and to tell persons the good things I thought of them and their performances, may have exposed me to censure; though I may truly say, I have always inwardly thought what I said: For my mind has never been in such a state, but that I must have felt a sensible and memorable horror for doing otherwise. These things may have given advantages against me. The vast variety of public affairs, in which I have been concerned; which, with all my tenderness, and desire, as far as I honestly might, to please every one, I could not manage without displeasing some, hath increased the number of those, who are offended with me. The acquaintance, and for a while friendship, which I have had with some persons of the laity, who have proved treacherous and infamous persons, hath been a further snare; as the friendship of bad men always is. My refusing to be blindly the tool of a party, and to go plumb into all their measures, hath disobliged no small number.

"When all these things come to be traced in their several streams and combinations (together with what I have said of my own acknowledged infirmities, of which I am truly sensible) they will account for this strange phœnomenon, at which you are surprised. I have all this while retained the esteem and friendship of several persons of great worth, by whom I have been most intimately known for many years. I will tell you, in confidence, that these aspersions are a cross, which God hath enabled me to bear with a christian temper; and he has really given me a heart to pray, in the most affectionate manner and every day, for my slanderers; and conscientiously to abstain from saying many things, which I could have said, to the disadvantage of many of their characters. These things may perhaps be permitted, that I may not be too much exalted by the unreasonable and extravagant applauses I have sometimes met with. I have a persuasion in my own heart, that if God con-

tinue my life a few years, many of these things will die. I shall be made more cautious by them and more humbly seek that wisdom from God, which is necessary to *cut off occasion* from some who spitefully seek it. I shall also, while they continue, have opportunities of exercising several graces of the christian temper, which though concealed from human eyes, have their value in the sight of God. And I may be made more desirous of leaving a world, where I meet with so much unkindness, for that, where love will be perfected. I do in the mean time, empower and desire you, when you hear any thing to the disadvantage of my character, to tell the reporters, that I am not afraid that any part of my conduct should be canvassed, if they will fairly hear my own account of it, and prepare themselves to pardon some infirmities, which an honest man, with my frank temper and various affairs, may fall into; but if they will condemn me unheard, I must appeal to a higher tribunal: And in the mean time, I will in the general appeal to those, who have long and intimately known me, and on whose sincerity I could venture my life.

While I am conscious to myself that I act upon christian motives, I make little of the censures of men; but I would avoid unnecessary offence. In the midst of all, my soul dwells at ease in God, and I find unutterable pleasure in a conquest obtained over those resentments, which are ready to rise on such occasions, but which, I can truly say, are crucified on the cross of Christ. God is teaching me good lessons, and exercising my graces (alas! too low and feeble in proportion to so much cultivation) by such things as these; and I desire to adore his wisdom and bless his name in all. I am seeking for opportunities to *overcome evil with good.* In the midst of this agitation, I thank God that I can say, It is not a very great thing to me (if I cannot say so chearfully as I ought, that *it is a very small one) to be judged of man's judgment. The day of the Lord is at hand.* I had rather suffer many of these injuries than offer one. It is my desire to behave under them, as becometh a christian and to be made more watchful by them. Let but my heart be with God; the visits of his grace made to me, and the prospect of glory presented to my believing eyes, so as to engage my more constant pursuit; let but my temper be becoming a christian and ministerial profession; and I hope other things will impress me little. I am a weak and a sinful creature, but one who sincerely believes the gospel; who could desire to spread the savour of it, if possible, over all the world, and to bring the power of it into every

heart, that it may grow humble and pure, benevolent and upright; and who heartily wishes every thing opposite to the gospel, might fall, *not by might or power, but by the spirit of the Lord.* Nor am I much concerned, any further than the honour of my master is interested in it, whether I go *through evil report or good report.* If any think me a deceiver, God knows I am true. If any wish that I were unknown, I bless God, I have reason to believe that I am well known to not a few, by tokens which will never be forgotten." In some of his private reflections, he saith; "These are the favours of my God to me the last year: And may I not also reckon in the number of them, the opposition I have met with, I think undeservedly, for things well intended, and; I believe, for bearing a faithful testimony to the truths of the gospel, which hath occasioned me many enemies, and will, I doubt not, prove an occasion of verifying my master's words, *Great is your reward in heaven.*"——These are some of his sentiments on the reflections thrown upon his character and designs; and whoever attends to the account he gives of his temper and business, will easily see how malice, prejudice or ignorance might graft aspersions upon them.

He had likewise some enemies from his own household. It will not be wondered at, that a person who had educated about two hundred young men, should meet with a few in that number, who behaved ill, and requited him *evil for good.* Some of them proved wicked; and he humbly acknowledged before God in his private reflections on such a painful circumstance, "That by a false complaisance he lost much of his authority over them; in consequence of which they grew worse, and he was obliged to expel them." As to others of them, he was not so well satisfied of their real piety, and being hearty in undertaking the ministerial work, as to be able with a good conscience to recommend them. Some of them had embraced tenets, which he knew would render them unacceptable to most dissenting churches; and therefore he could not recommend them to some, where they would have chosen to settle. Being therefore carried away with the warmth of their passions, and that pride and impatience of controul, which is so often found in youth, they charged their tutor with treating them unkindly, though they were on many accounts under great obligations to him, and set themselves to misrepresent his character.

Thus he laments his own case; "Some have thought themselves injured, because I cannot oblige them, at the ex-

pence of my conscience, by granting them testimonials which I know they do not deserve; or by helping them into settlements, which would be unhappy to themselves and the congregations, which refer their case to my advice. For this reason, imaginary injuries, never complained of to me, were talked over and aggravated. My conduct was continually watched over for evil: My writings, lectures, sermons, letters, words, every thing, were compared to find out imaginary inconsistencies, and to charge them, as instances of dishonesty, partiality, and what not? When they went abroad they talked of these things; and there were those in both extremes, who were ready to lay hold on any story to my disadvantage. But this is my comfort, that most of those, who have been my pupils, are my cordial and affectionate friends: And I find all the tenderest and most grateful friendship from those now under my care. I am more and more confirmed in the judgment I passed on those, who are setting out in the church; and am convinced that the part I have acted, in the difference I have made between them, hath been approved in the sight of him, to whom my final account is soon to be rendered. In the mean time, the longer I live, the less I am inclined to enter into debates, which I have neither time nor heart for; and perhaps have been too indolent in tracing out injurious reports, and too dilatory in making remonstrances for ill usage. I have generally chosen the shorter way, heartily to forgive and pray for those from whom I have apprehended that I have received the most injurious treatment; and to endeavour to live in such a manner, that they, who intimately know me, may not lightly believe rumours to my disadvantage.

Methinks the lovers of mankind, and the lovers of christianity too, should pardon each other some little mistakes in conduct, and should put the gentlest, not the harshest, construction upon things which may wear a dubious aspect. I will endeavour to bear these things, as a burden, which providence is pleased to lay in my way. I will remember him, who bore, in all respects, infinitely worse usage for me; and will comfort myself with looking forward to that day, when every calumny will be wiped off: when omniscience will attest, as it certainly will, the integrity of my conduct, and when those evil principles, which may in some degree, and at some times, leaven the minds of good men, will be all purged away."——With regard to those of his pupils, who occasioned the foregoing reflections, I have great reason to believe, that further knowledge of the world and themselves,

convinced them, that they had acted wrong. I assuredly know, that some of them deeply repented of it afterwards; and particularly one, who a little before his death, wrote his tutor a most pathetic and friendly letter, in which he largely confessed his own guilt; laid open to him many of the sly arts, which had been used to hurt his character, and, with all the marks of humility, penitence and affection, earnestly desired his forgiveness and his prayers.*

I have been larger upon this part of the Doctor's character than was, perhaps, necessary to illustrate and vindicate it: but probably some yet living may entertain prejudices against him and against his writings in consequence thereof. I was therefore willing to set it in its true light; and to exhibit a noble pattern of a christian behaviour, under such reproaches and slanders, as many good and useful men are yet suffering by, and the best, perhaps, most. I shall only add, that he practised the advice which he gave to others in such circumstances, and did not "suffer himself to be interrupted in his generous, worthy course, by the little attacks of envy and calumny, which he met with in it. He was still attentive to the general good, and steadily resolute in his endeavours to promote it; and he left it to providence to guard or to rescue his character from the base assaults of malice and falsehood, which, he had observed and experienced, will often, without a person's labour, con-

* It may not be amiss to take notice of an aspersion, which was thrown on the Doctor, a little before his death, as if he had acted unfaithfully in the guardianship of Miss Ekins, daughter of Thomas Ekins, Esq; of Chester on the Water, in Northamptonshire, one of his Majesty's justices of the peace and the Doctor's intimate friend: Especially as I have heard, that it had spread itself as far as New-England, where the falsehood of such a charge could not so easily be detected. It will be a sufficient answer to such a calumny to say, that the young lady, at the Doctor's decease, was so sensible of his integrity, that at her request, being then eighteen years of age, the Lord Chancellor Hardwicke appointed the Doctor's widow guardian in his stead; that on her attainment of her age of twenty one years, the whole account of her estate was carefully examined by her and met with her entire approbation. This lady is since married to the Rev. Dr. James Stonhouse, a gentleman of a handsome paternal estate, formerly a physician of great eminence at Northampton, and now (1765) lecturer of All-Saints, in Bristol: And it is at their united request I add, that they are sensible of their obligations to the Doctor and his lady, for the fidelity, prudence and friendship discovered by them in the discharge of their trust, and that they retain the highest veneration for the Doctor's memory. Those who were best acquainted with the whole affair, were so far from thinking that his conduct stood in need of any defence, that they considered both his undertaking the trust, amidst his various other cares, and the manner in which he discharged it, especially in the education of his ward, as a striking instance of his probity, friendship and benevolence.

fute themselves; and heap upon the authors greater shame, or, if they are inaccessible to that, greater infamy, than his humanity would allow him to wish them*."

SECT. VIII.

His Piety towards God, and his Devotion, as the Support of that, and every other Virtue.

IT may truly be said of Dr. Doddridge, as it was of Socrates, that his life was a life of prayer†. We have already seen the care he took to maintain a devout spirit, and live near to God in early life. He held on this religious course, and grew stronger and stronger even to the last‡. He made conscience of presenting serious addresses to God every morning and evening, whatever his business and avocations were, and often employed some moments in the middle of the day in the same manner. That his devotions might be more regular, copious and advantageous, and his mind be kept in a devout frame through the day, he laid down a plan for this purpose, which I have reason to believe he often reviewed in a morning, as it always lay upon his desk §; and from thence it appears what pains he took to

* Rise and Progress, &c. ch. 28. § 9.

† Max. Tyr. Diss. 30.

‡ The prime and leading feature of his soul was that of devotion. This was the pervading principle of his actions, whether private or public. What Dr. Johnson has observed with regard to Dr. Watts, that as piety predominated in his mind, it was diffused over his works; and that whatever he took in hand was, by his incessant solicitude for souls, converted to theology, may with equal propriety be applied to Dr. Doddridge —K.

§ As this may be useful to serious persons, especially ministers, who ought to be men of eminent devotion and holiness, I will here insert it, in his own concise manner. "Every morning, rising and dressing, meditate————on Lord's-day, the concerns of the church in general————Monday, rules for my own conduct ————Tuesday, the case of my friends————Wednesday, Mercies received ————Thursday, the concerns of the congregation————Friday, evangelical views————Saturday, my relations————each day remember special hints ————then pray, renew my covenant with God, read the scriptures, sing a psalm————larger devotion, reverential; prepared for; thoughts guarded in it; reflected upon afterwards.————Business of the day; seasonable, with good intentions and dispatch.————Recreations, moderate, well designed.————Providences, merciful; thankful for reason, senses, health, ease, food, raiment, sleep, friends, life, liberty, safety, acceptance, success.————Afflictive events, God's hand, design; submit in all things, great and small; surrender all comforts to him. ————Temptations, foreseen, observed, resisted; presence of God, Christ, angels and men; remembered for caution.————Grace, dependance upon it, earnestly sought, to awaken holy affections, through Christ, by the spirit, frequent ejaculations.————Thoughts during intervals, a general command practised; subjects of them, morning-scripture, the last, the next, sermon.———— Discourse, inno-

keep up the life and ardour of religion in his soul. He was careful that his first thoughts in the morning and last in the evening, should, in a special manner, be consecrated to God. According to his exhortations to others*, he selected some one verse of scripture every morning, to treasure up in his mind, resolving to think of that at any time, when he was at a loss for matter of pious reflection in any intervals of leisure. He found this as a spring from whence many profitable and delightful thoughts arose, which he might not before see in that connection and force. It furnished him with matter for devout ejaculation, and prevented his thoughts from being at the mercy of those various trifles, which otherwise intruded upon him. He thought it of great importance, and found it of much advantage, to renew his covenant with God, and make a fresh and solemn dedication of himself, his capacities, time and strength to his service every morning; and especially to spend every Lord's-day morning in devotional exercises, as the best preparative for the public services of the day. He esteemed devout meditation an important part of a christian's duty, an excellent means of fitting the heart for prayer, and an exercise which afforded great pleasure. "Oh, saith he, how much delightful enjoyment of God have I lost, by neglecting occasional meditation?" He reckoned a serious diligent care in the performance of secret prayer, an evidence and support of real religion; and strongly recommended it to others, as a most powerful incentive to every duty, and the best relief under the fatigues and afflictions of life. Thus he addressed one of his brethren; "That minister

cent, useful, provided for.————Evangelical views; bless God for Christ and the Spirit; daily exercise faith in Christ, as teacher, atonement, intercessor, governor, example, strength, guardian, forerunner.————Avoid excess, imprudence, formality in prayers and praises, especially at meals.————Repeat as above, in the evening, and add self-examination. Have I attended to proper business, improved sermons or other writings, watched over pupils?————Ask the prosperity of the academy, congregation, our country; reformation advanced; thy kingdom come. ————My relations, minister, tutor, domestic, writer, friend, visitant, correspondent.————List of friends to be particularly prayed for.————Persons in the congregation, according to their circumstances, unconverted, awakened, alienated, excommunicated, the various afflicted. Remember the notes of last Lord's-day.————Memorandum, there must be an enlargement of soul previous to any remarkable success; and great diligence in prayer, and strict watchfulness over my own soul, previous to any great and habitual enlargement; and deep humiliation must precede both. When the ground is thus prepared, great and good fruit may arise from small seeds.————I find it never well in family-worship, when it is not so in secret; never well abroad, when it is not so at home; nor on common days, when not so on the Lord's. The better I pray, the better I study, &c.

* Rise and Progress, ch. 19. § 18.

hath great reason to suspect the integrity of his own heart, who can pray with some copiousness, affection and pleasure with others, and in secret can only find in his heart to run over a few hasty, inattentive and customary words, in such a manner, as he would be ashamed to do, if any one of his fellow-creatures was present. Guard against this, and especially in the evening; when the fatigue, arising from the labours of the day, may expose you to particular danger of it. As prayer is the food and breath of all practical religion, so secret prayer in particular is of vast importance: Insomuch that I verily believe, that if a man were to keep a particular and accurate journal of his own heart, but for one month, he would find as real and exact a correspondence between the temper of his soul at the seasons of secret devotion, and in other parts of his life, as we find between the changes of the barometer and the weather."

He often lamented the tendency, which the variety of his cares, though most important in themselves, had, to make him less serious, copious and fervent in secret prayer, than he should have been. Thus he expressed himself to his friends; "I am often mindful of you in my prayers; though, alas! I have so many hurries of business and interruptions, and sometimes find so much indisposition in my own heart for the exercises of devotion, and my thoughts so much dissipated by the cumber of many things, that truly my prayers are to be little accounted of. But the less capable I am of praying as I could wish, for my friends and myself, the more need I have of their remembrance. My great desire, even when I am at the worst, is, that I may glorify God and promote the great purposes of religion. For that, I am honestly labouring, though amidst many infirmities; and I hope not entirely in vain."——"My weight of business does, in some measure, rob me of the greatest treasure I have in the world; I mean the hours I would wish to spend in secret devotion; without which there is no sweetness, no calm and serenity of mind, and therefore very little capacity for managing business. For so it is, though it may seem a riddle, that when I pray and meditate most, I work most."

In all his addresses to God, he was large in praise and thanksgiving; esteeming it a proper expression of gratitude to God, a necessary and delightful duty on other accounts, and the means of promoting habitual chearfulness of mind.—He carefully watched the frame of his own heart and recorded the most important particulars relating to it, that they might guide, warn or encourage him for the future.

It has been already observed, that he began to keep a diary of his life, when he was fourteen years of age: In this he noted the business he had dispatched; the temper and workings of his mind, in the various labours and occurrences of the day, and particularly in his acts of devotion at home and abroad; what he had learned in reading, conversation, or by his own reflections; any remarkable providences relating to himself, his friends or others, or to the church of God. But in his latter years, when nothing occurred, that deserved to be recorded, he contented himself with some particular marks, by which he could afterwards observe, what was the frame of his spirit, how he had performed his devotions and spent his days. By this method very little time was employed in making the particular marks, and the end of a diary was sufficiently answered. The warmth and affection of his natural temper rendered such watchfulness particularly necessary to him, especially in his youth. Many days of humiliation and devotion he employed in that period to subdue and regulate his passions, in which he happily succeeded. When he found his heart enlarged and warmed with devout meditation on divine subjects, he sometimes committed his thoughts to writing, and perused those meditations for his own instruction and comfort, at times when he found his thoughts rambling and confused. Several specimens of this kind the world hath already seen in his Rise and Progress of Religion.

He was a careful observer of the providences of God to himself, his family, friends, and country. He kept a register of the most remarkable interpositions of providence in his favour. In this are recorded some signal deliverances in his childhood and youth; the recovery of himself, his wife, children and friends from threatening disorders; and the preservation of his limbs and life in many hazardous circumstances. He takes particular notice of the goodness of God to him, in preserving him from harm, when, on the day of the coronation of King George II. he plunged himself into unnecessary danger, by going among the mob to see the procession, and was thrown down from a scaffold among the horse-guards.——The deliverance of his house from being destroyed by fire hath been taken notice of in the preface to the sixth volume of the Family Expositor; concerning which he writes; "Well may it be said, *Is not this a brand plucked out of the burning?* A fire was kindled among my papers, which endangered the utter ruin of my

affairs. Several sermons, papers, and books were utterly consumed. Every thing else in my study, and perhaps the whole house, had soon followed it, had it not been for the glance of an eye, by which an opposite neighbour discovered it. This gave me an opportunity of rescuing my books of accounts with my pupils and my ward, one manuscript volume of my Family Expositor (of which, there was not a leaf unburnt, nor a line destroyed, which had not been transcribed) and the rest of the original. The danger was so extreme, that one quarter of an hour, if the house had been saved, had almost undone me. I desire to leave it upon record, that I now have received this wonderful mercy from the Lord, and would consider it as an engagement to devote all I have to him with greater zeal." This register he reviewed on days of extraordinary devotion to preserve his gratitude and increase his activity in the service of God.

He traced all the kindness of his friends to him, and all the concern for the support of religion, which he observed in them or others, to the hand of God, who put such things into their hearts. He likewise acknowledged it in his afflictive events, in the death of his friends, the attacks made upon his reputation, and his disappointment in some of his schemes of usefulness: And his frequent language was, "My God is humbling me, and I need it; Oh, that it may quicken me likewise!"—It was customary with him, when he recorded any important and instructive occurrence, to add what lessons it was adapted to teach and he was desirous to learn from it; that when he reviewed it afterwards, his attention to those instructions might be renewed, if the impression, which the occurrence made at the time, should be worn off. Many instances of this prudent care might be given. The following extract from his papers may serve as a specimen. "Falling into conversation with some persons of rank, who appeared to be profane and earthly, it imprinted on my mind, and may I ever retain it, a deep sense of the vanity of life, when not governed by religion. I heartily pitied them; and was truly sensible of my obligations to God, who has in some measure formed me to sweeter pleasures and nobler expectations." The affair of Connel mentioned Sect. IV. is another remarkable instance of the same kind.

He had a high idea of the efficacy of prayer. He had seen so many glorious effects following it, when there was

little hope from human wisdom and power alone; he had read so many well attested instances, in which God had conferred singular honour and favours upon his praying servants, and found his own spirit so much improved and animated by devotion, that he resolved to continue instant in prayer. I have reason to believe, from some hints in his diary, that besides his stated devotion, he seldom set himself to study, compose, or write letters of importance, without previous prayer. Before he went to visit persons, whom he suspected to be in an unconverted state, who were dangerously ill, in spiritual distress, or mourning the death of their friends, he *asked wisdom of God* to conduct his conversation and prayers with them, in the most useful manner. It was observed above, that in early life, before he went journies, he spent some time in serious reflection, on the various scenes, labours, temptations and dangers, through which he was likely to pass, and spread them before the Lord; and after his return, reviewed the several stages and events of his journies with suitable devotion. To this may be added, that when he travelled with any of his pupils, or intimate friends, he was solicitous that his conversation with them might be edifying. He endeavoured to lead them into pious, useful reflections on the various objects and occurrences of their journey. To prevent the stagnation of good discourse, each of them mentioned some text of scripture at their entrance on every particular stage, which was to be the subject of their meditation and discourse by the way. Once, before he entered on a long journey of several weeks, he drew up a short plan, how a journey might be religiously conducted; and communicated it to his fellow travellers Thus was he desirous to lead them forward with him in his journey to the heavenly world. It hath likewise been observed above, that he kept the returns of his birth day, and new year's day with peculiar solemnity; and I will now insert some specimens of his reflections and resolutions on those days.

"June 26, 1728, Since God hath been pleased to spare my life, and bring me to another remarkable period of it, I do hereby, with the greatest solemnity, 1. Acknowledge his goodness in continuing it to me. It hath been conducted and supported by wonderful mercy; and I leave it upon record to his glory, that *hitherto the Lord, my God, hath helped me.* 2. I confess my guilt and unworthiness, which I have been recollecting and lamenting before him, and humbly cast myself

on his forgiving mercy, and on the powerful mediation of my blessed Redeemer, as the only things, which can give me foundation of hope. 3. I would thankfully and chearfully renew the dedication of myself to his service, and would humbly resolve, by his gracious assistance, to spend the next year of my life in more ardent devotion, in more important and resolute studies, in more vigorous attempts for public usefulness, than I have ever yet known. 4. I humbly refer to him the disposal of all events; particularly to determine as to the continuance of my life. I think, if I have any reason to desire it may be lengthened out, next to securing brighter evidences of my title to eternal glory by my faithful obedience, it is, that I may be able to do good in the world. O my God, accept of my humiliations and my vows. Grant me thy favourable presence in life and death, and chuse for me what thou pleasest; for I am fully determined, that, from this time forward, I will have no will of my own in opposition to thine."

On another of these days, having laid down a plan of study, business and improvement of time, he adds, "I am far from imagining that by such a manner of spending my time, attended with the most diligent care to avoid all kinds of evil, both of flesh and spirit, I can recommend myself to the divine favour, and procure the pardon of my sins, without the mercy of God and the blood of the Redeemer; but by such a conduct I hope I may glorify him, promote my usefulness in life and so secure the tranquillity of my own soul; and, if I am enabled to do this, I think I need not be very solicitous about any events of life which may befall me; but may chearfully resign myself to that gracious providence, which I have found hitherto so ready to take care of me. O God, thou art witness, this day is witness, and this paper is witness, that I am heartily grieved for all the instances, in which I have offended thee, and that it is my sincere desire to return to thee, in the way of repentance, faith and holy obedience. May I be kept near to thee, from the beginning of the year, to the end thereof, if thy providence sees fit to continue my life! May I from this remarkable day date the most happy change in my temper and behaviour, that I may be as active in the business of life, as I have been negligent and remiss; and do as much to please and serve thee, as I have in time past, done to offend thee! Or if I die, may I die to the Lord, and get above this body of sin and death, which has long given me such painful exercise!"

His reflections on another birth-day are these: "Having, through amazing mercy, completed another year of my

life, I have been recollecting the goodness of my God to me. How shall I excite, how shall I express, the sense I ought to have of it! Blessed, for ever blessed, be the name of the Lord! *In his name would I rejoice all the day long*, and set up my banners with unutterable pleasure. I have been praising him, and would praise him, that he hath made me a man, a christian, a minister, a tutor, an author; and hath heaped numberless blessings upon me under these characters, and as a husband, a father, and a friend also. Late mercies, by no means to be forgotten, are great assistance in my ministry, wonderful communications of light and love to my soul, especially in some instances of secret meditation; carrying me on thus far with my Family Expositor; raising up some hopeful youths, who are now just appearing in the world; adding to me the friendship of some excellent persons, and giving me to see the prosperity of his gospel, in some remarkable instances, both at home and abroad. These things impress my heart. Oh, may they melt it more and more in love! My God, I own thy goodness. I record it, that I am thine. Thou, that knowest my heart, knowest, that thy service is the delight of my days. Eternal praises to thy name for it! *My times are in thy hand.* To thee do I chearfully refer it, whether I shall end the year now begun, in thy service on earth, or in thy presence in heaven. I leave my soul with thee through Christ, and having done that, find no difficulty in committing all my temporal interests to thee, and intrusting thee with all my relative concerns."

"Jan. 1, 1726-7. Last night I was seriously reflecting upon the year which I am come to the conclusion of; and I now look forward to the year which I am entered upon. I see many necessities, which can only be supplied by divine bounty; many duties which I shall be utterly unable to perform without the communications of divine grace; and many uncertain events, which I cannot make myself easy about, any other way than by referring them to the divine care. Nothing therefore can be more reasonable, than to renew the dedication of myself to the service of God this morning. Accordingly I have done it in secret prayer; and, in order to confirm the impression of it upon my heart, I now repeat it by the writing of my hand. To thee, O glorious and eternal God, the creator, preserver, and ruler of all; to thee, the invariable Father of lights, and overflowing fountain of all good, do I devote my unworthy soul. In dependence on the atonement

and intercession of thy dear son, and on the powerful assistance of thine almighty grace, I humbly renew my covenant with thee. *I call thee to record upon my soul,* that I am grieved and ashamed to think how wretchedly I have been alienated from thee; and I do now seriously determine, that I will endeavour in every action of life, to approve myself in thy sight, and to behave as thy faithful servant. To thee do I consecrate all that I am, and have, all my time, worldly possessions, the powers of my soul and the members of my body. And, because it may be of use to specify some particulars comprehended in this general engagement, I would especially resolve, to be more careful in the improvement of my time, to redeem it from unnecessary sleep, useless visits, impertinent discourse, idle speculations, negligence in business, excessive recreations; and to watch over my actions, words, thoughts, and affections, answerably to these engagements. I will endeavour to conquer pride in my heart, and with the most vigorous resolution, restrain all the appearances of it. I will endeavour to behave with constant kindness and complaisance, prudence and gravity. I will labour after greater ardour in devotion, and use all proper means to attain it; especially preparing my heart, praying for thy spirit, keeping up ejaculatory prayer and using the assistance of scripture. I will be watchful for opportunities of doing good both to the bodies and souls of my fellow-creatures, and consider all my time and worldly possessions as given me principally for this purpose. In subservience to these general resolutions, I would particularly engage, to maintain a constant dependence on thy grace and frequent self-examination; to record remarkable appearances, and to recover from the first declension. I beg that thy grace may enable me to fulfil these engagements. All the unknown events of the year, do I put into thy hands; leaving it to thee to determine, whether I shall be healthy or sick, rich or poor, honoured or dishonoured, surrounded with friends or deprived of them; successful in business, or incapable of it, or disappointed in it; in a word, whether I shall live or die; only let me be thy servant. Whithersoever thou leadest, I will follow; whatsoever thou takest, I will resign; whatsoever thou layest upon me, I will patiently bear. Only let *thy grace be sufficient for me*; and then call me to what services or sufferings thou pleasest."

"Jan. 1, 1727-8. I have been reviewing and renewing the surrender I made of myself to God, this day twelve-month. I have formed my rules for devotion, self-examination and a

pious life in a more particular manner, than I had before done; and I do by this writing, solemnly renew my covenant with God; and determine, by his grace, that I will maintain, as far as possible, a constant sense of God upon my soul, from day to day and hour to hour; and that not a day nor an hour of this new year shall be entirely thrown away. I know not what this year may bring forth. Thou mayest perhaps remove me to some settlement, where I shall have greater opportunities of service; and to this prospect, I would give up all my delightful enjoyments here. On the other hand, if thou shalt disappoint any of the schemes that are or may be formed for this purpose, I shall chearfully continue here, or follow wherever thy providence shall lead; though it be ever so contrary to my present views and inclinations. Nay, shouldst thou see fit to remove me by death this year, as thou hast many of my friends the last, I will by no means dispute thy wise and gracious disposal. Behold, thy servant is in thy hand; do with me as seemeth good in thy sight. Only secure me from falling into sin, and violating my engagements. Keep me thy faithful servant, and chuse, as thou pleasest, in what condition, in what place, in what world, I shall serve thee."

"Jan. 1733-4. I took some time for extraordinary meditation and prayer this day; in which I endeavoured to consider myself as the steward of God, and shortly to give an account; the subject I had been insisting upon in public. I charged myself before him, with the many talents I have received from his hands, and humbled myself before him for the misimprovement of them. Particularly, the powers of my soul; that my understanding hath been no more cultivated, no more employed in the contemplation of the highest and noblest object; that my memory hath been stored with so many trifles; that my affections have been fixed too fondly upon things seen and temporal, but cold and dead to my Father and God, to my dear Redeemer and to that eternal state of glory, which is so well worthy my most ardent and vigorous pursuit; that my conscience hath been no more reverenced and consulted, as the vicegerent of God, and that the dictates of it have been in so many instances over-borne. As to my bodily powers, I humbled myself before God, that my senses have not been more the means of leading me to admire that God, who formed the organs in so surprising a manner and hath so

suitably adapted them to the external objects, with which I am surrounded; that my eyes and ears, my hands and feet have been no more employed for him; especially that my tongue hath been so often silent, when his glory and the instruction of others have been concerned.—As to my possessions, I lamented that they have been no more regarded as coming from God, nor more carefully employed for his honour and service:——And as to my influence and authority over others, that I have not duly improved it for his glory and their benefit.——I lamented the mispence of my time, and neglect of many extraordinary as well as common advantages of doing and receiving good.—I owned the divine goodness in many merciful providences and visits of his grace; and that, notwithstanding my defects, I had a comfortable reflection on many days and many duties, in which I hope he accepted my labours. It is my desire to return to him from my wanderings, and to give myself more faithfully to his service. The communion I have had with him this day, in reading, secret prayer and other duties, especially in public worship, is a token for good that I shall do so; as such I accept it, and humbly adore the name of God for it."

"Jan. 1, 1743-4. My soul was early employed this morning in aspirations after God. I reckoned up, as well as I was able, the temporal mercies he bestowed upon me the last year. In the list of spiritual mercies, I reviewed opportunities for religious improvement, growing love to God, submission to his will, a more prosperous state of soul than hath commonly been known by me in former years; and an indifference to all worldly views, when compared with those, of building up the church and glorifying the name of God in it. In reflecting on the returns I had made to God the last year, I found cause for humiliation, especially in three respects; that conversation had been no better improved; that I had not been more diligent in visiting and inspecting my flock, and that I had not been more exact in evening devotions. I also found reason to blame myself for too long an interruption of religious instructions to my children and pupils: Yet I was perhaps, in no former year, more frequent with regard to some of these duties. I still want, greatly want, much more of the love of God in my heart to rectify these things."

"Jan. 1, 1746-7. Having been seriously reviewing the events of the last year, my mercies, afflictions, successes,

disappointments and infirmities, I am now laying a scheme of business for the next year. I desire to form all my schemes with an humble sense of the great uncertainty of life, of my dependence upon God, and with resignation to his will, to cut short the residue of my days, whenever it shall seem meet to his infinite wisdom. Only I desire, that, while I am continued, I may be found so doing, employed as the purposes of his glory and my own usefulness shall require. These are the projects I form; I form them for God. May he mercifully forgive my former trifling! May he graciously accept my sincere purposes for his service; and whenever he is pleased to take me away, may he raise up some more valuable instruments, for the honour of his name and gospel among us, who may outdo my schemes, as much as they have too frequently done my execution."

In the account given above of his settlement at Northampton, the manner in which he proposed to keep private days of fasting, humiliation and prayer was mentioned. He chose those days for that purpose, which were set apart for his devotional lectures, and which his pupils employed in the like exercises. I find him often lamenting, how much he was interrupted in his converse with God on those days; and so many cares and avocations broke in upon them, that he could not pursue his plan so constantly and regularly as he intended. But, looking upon those cares as a reason why he should contrive, if possible, to be more intent and large in devotional exercises, especially as they too much hindered him in his daily devotions, he determined, in the latter years of his life, to spend a considerable part of those days in the vestry of his meeting-place; as he could there be free from interruption and use his voice without inconvenience. How his time and thoughts were employed there, the reader will see by some extracts from his own accounts of it. I shall beg leave first to introduce one instructive memoir, which confirms the reason given for his attention to these exercises.

"March 4, 1748-9. A variety of events, which have lately happened, hath been the means of throwing me very much off my guard and preventing that self-government and enjoyment of God, which I have frequently maintained, and in which I have been much happier than I now am. I have perceived the sensible withdrawings of the spirit of God from me, owing to much company, which broke in upon my morn-

ing and evening devotions, and brought upon me a habit of trifling; so that I have felt little of lively devotion, and been defective in some parts of pastoral duty. My heart smote me for this in the morning; and I determined to keep some particular hints of its frame, that I may judge how I proceed. My first resolution in order to mend it, was to carry it directly to the throne of grace, to complain of it there, and implore divine influences, to correct what is amiss and keep it better for the future. I begged to be led into the cause of my declensions; and I left the matter with the Lord to quicken me and comfort me in his own season; and in the mean time expressed my desire of waiting, though in the least joyful frame, till he shall be pleased to return; only desiring that I might wait in the posture of service, and that if I should enjoy ever so little, I might do all in my power for my God. My carelessness in self-examination was an evil, which also occurred to me in reflection. I formed some good resolutions with regard to these particulars. But when I consider how many of my good resolutions have, as it were, died in embryo, I have been full of fear, lest these should do so too. To prevent this, I would renew them in the divine strength, and in that strength would push them forward as fast as I can; remembering that a man of forty-seven is to count upon very little time before him. On the whole, it hath appeared to me, upon the most attentive survey, that I do indeed love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and that my soul is safe for eternity, should I be ever so suddenly surprised into it: but that there is much to be lamented and much to be corrected, or I shall lose much of that reward, which I might else have obtained, and much of that blessing upon my endeavours to do good, which I might else have expected: that if I should go on to trifle with the blessed God, as in some instances I have done, particularly by putting off some services, to which he calls me, on slight pretences, indulging so much idleness and irresolution with regard to the evening and its devotions, I may probably be chastened and wounded in the tenderest part."

"June 2, 1750. After my devotional lecture I retired to the vestry and endeavoured to prepare my soul for the work before me. I earnestly implored divine assistance: then reviewed my late conduct and struggled hard to humble myself deeply before God, which, blessed be his name, I did. I reviewed the dealings of God with me, confessed my sins before him, earnestly desired the warmer exercises of divine love;

renewed, with great sincerity, the entire surrender of myself to God, and thought with unutterable delight on the counterpart of the covenant, that he is my God; resolved in his strength rather to die, than to deal unfaithfully with him. Neither life nor even heaven appeared desirable, but as for his sake, to serve and enjoy him. I read some passages of scripture, especially the latter end of Romans viii. and some devout hymns. I then prayed for temporal and spiritual blessings for myself; and made earnest intercession for my dear flock, for each of my children, pupils and select friends by name. I also interceded with growing fervour, for the propagation of the gospel abroad, and the advancement of it in my own country. I then spent some time in projecting further schemes for the divine honour. A storm of thunder rising, I had some delightful views in reading psalm xxix. I then set myself to a solemn act of thanksgiving, with which I concluded these retired devotions. And I must record it, to the honour of divine grace, that I never enjoyed more of God in my whole life, than in the compass of these five hours. Oh, how wanting have I been to myself that I have no more sought such feasts as these! Cares lay in ambush for me at home, from which I had great reason to rejoice that I had so long escaped."

"September 1, 1750. I had long expected and wished for this day, hoping for much pleasure and advantage from it. I pursued my former plan, and found a delightful mixture of gratitude and humility in my heart. I renewed my covenant with God, through the blood of his son; rejoiced in it, and endeavoured to impress my soul with this thought that it was through the efficacy of Christ's blood, that this blessed privilege was allowed me. I was employed near an hour in praying for the interest of religion in the world, and a blessing on our own land, lamenting the sins of the public with some affection, and praying with some zeal for the averting deserved judgments, and the revival of religion. I bless God, that this day hath been observed. The work in which I have been employed, and the goodness of God in so remarkably manifesting himself to me, and making me so happy, do certainly greatly increase my engagements to holy diligence in my walk with God and ministerial duties, in the care of my people and pupils, my children and servants; nor will my cries for his holy spirit be vain."

"October 5, 1750. With great relish did I think of this day before its approach. It was late before I reached my asy-

lum, the vestry. In pursuing my plan, I reviewed the memoranda of the last month and saw much cause for thanksgiving and to mingle humiliation with it; thanksgiving, especially for assistance in my public labours, which, through grace, have been this month animated and pleasant: but I had reason to be humbled, that I had dispatched much less business in my study, than I should have done, and that there has been too great a neglect of the private care of my congregation. For this I humbled myself before God, while I acknowledged his mercy. I found particular reason to praise him for some favours to me with regard to the academy and congregation; the prospect of success in some of my schemes for his glory; the rise of the society for promoting religious knowledge among the poor, and the prevention of some party schemes from taking place. During these exercises, I felt a holy joy in God in the views of heaven, and hope of appearing with acceptance in the presence of my judge at last. I spent a whole hour in the delightful exercise of intercession; with great fervency pouring out my soul before God, for the world and the church; losing what was particular in what was general, upon truly christian and catholic principles, God is witness. Before I entered on what was peculiar to the design of the day, I set myself to contemplate the sufferings of Christ. I had a delightful survey of them, and was enabled to rejoice in his triumph and glory, and anew to devote myself to him, as *not my own, but bought with a price.* I found my heart inflamed with an earnest desire of acting for this Saviour, and asked of God wisdom and resolution for this purpose. In the close, I was taken up with admiring and adoring redeeming love, and in blessing God for that communion, which I had this day enjoyed with him. He hath been with me of a truth; he hath heard the language of my heart as well as my voice; and I leave it upon record, that I have a chearful expectation of his blessing, and hope to have new matter of praise, as to manifestation of divine love to my soul and ministerial success, before another of these days returns. I saw with regret my time for this exercise was ended: I left the feast with an appetite, and my soul said, *It is good to be here. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from henceforth, even for ever! Amen.*"

"May 4, 1751. My heart was, I trust, upright with God in all the duties of the morning both in secret and in the family. In my retirement at the vestry, I made it my first business to pour out my soul before God, which I did with

great freedom and enlargement, ardently longing for more of his spirit to sanctify and quicken me. I devoted myself to God in my various relations, with warm resolutions for his service, and laid all my views and comforts at his feet. What was most particular in the exercises of this day was, that upon reviewing some accounts of the temper of my mind many years ago, I observed and reflected upon the sad inconstant state in which it was for some time in my youth. I confessed those particular sins and all my sins, with very low and abasing thoughts of myself. I did in some measure *abhor myself and repent, as in dust and ashes.* And being filled with shame and confusion of face on account of them, I took some time to humble myself more solemnly before God for them; intreating his mercy to pardon what is past, and the sanctifying influences of his grace more fully to renew my soul; beseeching the Lord, not to blast my labours on account of them, as I have deserved; praying that I may bear them in remembrance, while I live in every future circumstance of life. I was much affected to think, that, notwithstanding them, God should honour me as an instrument of so much usefulness. Among other mercies, I thankfully acknowledged divine goodness, that I had been enabled so faithfully to execute that part of my scheme, of visiting families and conversing with them on religious subjects, and prayed for every family and person I had visited with this view, as their circumstances required. I then formed some purposes for serving God and promoting his glory, which I turned into prayers, asking of him prudence and resolution to fulfil them. I particularly asked for myself more of the spirit of prayer, and a heart more devoted to God than ever. I was so delighted with my nearness to God that I was loth to break off. I was comforted in the review of my work, that my prayers had been solemn, sincere and deliberate; though not attended with such a fervour of spirit, through the whole exercise, as I have sometimes felt at these seasons. I left the place with a chearful persuasion, that my prayers were heard, and that I shall *see the outgoings of my God and my King in his sanctuary.* Adored be the condescending God, who gave me such a meeting in them! Oh, *when shall I come and appear before him again?*" I will only add another specimen; which may be serviceable to the devout and lively christian, by shewing him, that such delightful intercourse with heaven is not always to be expected, even when the greatest care is taken to secure it; but that necessary worldly business, bodily disorders, or growing infirmities may interrupt or lessen it.

"June 1, 1751. Having had more than ordinary work some past days, and being extremely low, my devotions were this day strangely mingled, and sadly interrupted; and upon the whole, it was the most uncomfortable day of this kind, that I ever spent: So that in reflecting upon it, I was tempted to think, that my time would have been more profitably employed in the usual business of the family and the academy, than in this retirement. I was fearful that my deadness this day might be owing to the divine displeasure against me, for having been more dissipated and negligent than usual, in my devotion and conduct. Truly secret devotion hath suffered a great deal, amidst the many cares and hurries, the unseasonable hours, the visits and company of late days. It seemed just in God to disappoint my expectations from this day, that I may learn caution for the future, especially in the scenes through which I am going to pass in my intended journey. My thoughts were more distracted and wandering than I ever before experienced on these days. I had many mercies to ask for myself, and for others, particularly for my pupils, who are going out into the church: Yet I felt a barrenness and deadness of heart, as if all these things were nothing to me. My thanksgivings and intercessions were really so unlike those I have sometimes offered, with all my heart and all my soul, that I hardly know how to call them prayers. I hope and believe upon the whole, that this was chiefly owing to the weakness of my frame and the dejection of my spirits. Nevertheless I thought it my duty to lament my indisposition for devotion and to struggle with it, which I did for a long time; and at length the duties of this retirement concluded with a bright hour, when committing my family, academy and church to God, and interceding for my friends and the public. My prayers were warm and lively, and they will not be vain. Having reviewed the memoranda of several of these seasons for the last year, I find, upon the whole, so much cause for thankfulness, that I purpose by divine grace to continue this practice, as long as I have life, health and ability."

Such pains did Dr. Doddridge take to keep up an habitual sense of God, to maintain and increase the ardour of religion in his heart; and to furnish himself, by these devout exercises, with spirit and resolution to go through the important and arduous labours of his station, which otherwise he could not have done! It is probable that some may treat such exercises as these with contempt, and think his time was very ill employed in them. I lament the stupidity and wretchedness of such persons; and could wish, by

any thing that hath been here said, to awaken those, who *cast off fear and restrain prayer before God.* Others, who do not entirely neglect devotion, may think so much time spent in it unnecessary, and that such exercises are burdensome and uncomfortable. But he found them delightful and animating; and I am persuaded every serious christian, who hath made the experiment, and taken due pains to engage the heart, hath found them so too. Besides his reflections upon them, mentioned above, I will add his public testimony to the pleasure of them. "The experience of many years of my life hath established me in a persuasion, that one day spent in a devout, religious manner, is preferable to whole years of sensuality and the neglect of religion. The most considerable enjoyments, which I expect or desire, in the remaining days of my pilgrimage on earth, are such, as I have directed you to seek in religion. Such love to God, such constant activity in his service, such pleasurable views of what lies beyond the grave, appear to me, God is my witness, a felicity infinitely beyond any thing else, which can offer itself to our affections and pursuits: And I would not, for ten thousand worlds, resign my share in them, or consent even to the suspension of the delights, which they afford, during the remainder of my abode here.*"

There is nothing I more desire by this work, and especially by the view which hath been given of Dr. Doddridge's piety, than to excite in the hearts of my readers, and especially ministers, a more diligent application to devotional exercises, and greater life and fervency in them; and with this view will recommend to their attention the following passage from the judicious Dr. Duchal's sermons. After observing, that prayer and other exercises of devotion are required, not on account of any advantages God can be supposed to receive from them, but to excite in us worthy and good affections, he adds; "Now, though this is indeed very true, yet consequences have been drawn from it, that are very false; particularly, that the whole of religion, that is, of real worth, consists in probity of mind, in good dispositions and behaviour towards our neighbour; and that where these are found, religious exercises are very little, if at all, useful; and that a constant and serious application to them is really superstitious. As the natural effect of this way of thinking, a very wide difference may be discerned between our taste and way,

* Rise and Progress, ch. 30. § 1.

and that of our predecessors. A great part of their religious business lay in the labours of the closet and in a solicitous attendance upon other religious services; whereas we have learned to be very indifferent as to these things, and easy in the neglect of them. But if we will think justly on this subject, we shall find an extreme defect on our side. Do but consider how natural it is to pay the utmost veneration to the divine being, and to take all proper occasions of expressing it. Is not this what we owe him? Is it not at least as just and equal as to pay regard to distinguished worth in our fellow creatures? And will not that sense of worth, and that affection, which determines us to this, as naturally determine us to pay the utmost regard to that being, whose worth and excellencies are quite peerless, and to do him the utmost honour? &c.*."

But Dr. Doddridge's devotion and piety was not confined to his secret retirements; it was manifested through every day, and appeared in his intercourse with men. Besides having his hours and plan for devout retirement, to which he kept as strictly and steadily as possible, he endeavoured to carry a devout temper with him into the world; and was lifting up his heart to God in those little vacancies of time, which often hang on the hands of the busiest of mankind, but might this way be profitably employed. In his daily converse there was a savour of religion. In his lectures of philosophy, history, anatomy, &c. he took occasion to graft some religious instructions on what he had been illustrating, that he might raise the minds of his pupils to God and heaven. The christian friend and minister appeared in his visits. He took care to drop some useful hints of reproof, advice or encouragement, suited to particular cases, where the conversation did not turn on subjects directly religious. He had resolution to reprove in a gentle but effectual manner, profane or licentious words spoken by persons of rank and fortune, and had the happy art of complimenting them upon some good quality they possessed, while he reproved their irregularities; and by this means prevented their shewing any resentment. He knew how by *an angry countenance* to *drive away a backbiting tongue*, when he could not, from personal knowledge, confute the slander.

He often concluded his common visits to his friends with prayer. This was comfortable and advantageous to them; directed them how to suit their prayers to the particular circumstances of their respective families, and gave him an opportunity

* Duchal's P. Serm. v. ii. no. ii. p. 50, 51.

of suggesting, in a powerful but inoffensive manner, some reflections, which it might be needful for them to attend to, according to their particular conditions and characters. When he went with a more direct intention to converse with families upon their religious concerns, he considered how he might most easily and naturally introduce the subject; how public occurrences, which were the topic of general conversation, might furnish him with an opportunity of leading their thoughts to God and religion. I find in his papers, many hints of the manner in which he would address particular persons; and lists of those, to whom such and such particular addresses should be made. So much prudence and caution was mingled with his pious concern for their benefit, that his end might not be defeated, nor *his good evil spoken of!* The same pious spirit appeared in his correspondence with his friends. In short letters upon business, he often inserted something that might lead their thoughts inward, impress them with some religious sentiment and increase their zeal. He thought no opportunity was to be lost of attempting this, and his large correspondence furnished him with many. He unbosomed his soul to his particular friends with great freedom and copiousness; and I am persuaded, they esteem his letters a most valuable treasure: In order that they may be more generally useful, I have made so many extracts from those, to which I could have access.

The following letter to one of his friends in 1728 appears deserving of notice, as a specimen of the method which he took to promote religion in their hearts; and as a hint to my readers, how they may improve their correspondence to the best purposes. His friend had complained of his neglect of writing; to which he answers; "My negligence in writing was certainly a fault; but, to speak very freely to a friend from whom I affect to conceal nothing, doth not a fault of a like nature prevail in us both, with regard to other instances of much greater importance? We feel a very sensible concern, when we have failed in any expressions of respect to a human friend: But is there not an invisible friend, who deserves infinitely better of us both, than we of each other, or than others of us? And yet him of all others we are most ready to forget. Is not he, every day and every moment, reminding us of his affection and care by a rich variety of favours, which surround us? And yet hath he not reason to complain, that our hearts are estranged from him? Believe me, my friend, when I think of my propensity to forget and offend God, all the instances of negligence, which others can charge me with, are as nothing; and I am almost ashamed

of that regret, which might otherwise appear reasonable and decent. Tell me freely; am I not opening your heart as well as my own? I hope and believe that you find a more abiding sense of the divine presence, and that a principle of holy gratitude and love governs more in your soul than in mine: But is there not yet some room for complaint? We will not dwell on the question: It is much more important to consider, how we may correct an irregularity of temper, which we are not so ignorant as not to see, nor so stupid as not to lament. It is a long time that we have spent in blaming ourselves; let us immediately endeavour to reform, lest our lamentations and acknowledgments serve only to render us so much the more criminal. I am well aware that this unhappy principle of indifference to God is implanted so deeply in our degenerate hearts, that nothing but a divine power is able to eradicate it: But let us make the attempt, and see how far the spirit of God will enable us to execute the resolution, which himself hath inspired. Is it not possible, by the blessing of God on proper attempts, that we may, in a short time, make it as natural and habitual to our thoughts to centre in God, and the Redeemer and the important hopes of eternal glory, as ever we have found them to centre on a favourite creature? At least, let us not conclude the contrary, till we have tried: And can we say that we have ever yet tried? That we have had the resolution, for one single week, to exert the utmost command over our thoughts to fix them upon divine objects? I have tried for a day or two with encouraging success; but never yet had the constancy to hold out for a week.——As this evening concludes one quarter of the year, I have devoted it to the review of my own temper and conduct. I find that numberless evils which have surrounded me may be traced up to this unhappy source, the forgetfulness of God. I therefore determine, by divine assistance, to attempt the reformation of the rest, by bending my most resolute opposition against this. I communicate these reflections to you, to engage the assistance of your prayers, and to recommend it to you to make the like attempt."

The grand principle, that animated him to all these exercises, labours and services was love; love to God and Christ and mankind. The following extracts from some letters to his friends will confirm this. "I bless God, I feel more and more of the power of his love in my heart, and I long for the conversion of souls more sensibly than for any thing besides. Methinks I could not only labour, but die for it with pleasure. *The love of Christ constrains me.*"——"I feel the

love of God in Christ shed abroad in my heart. Strive earnestly in your prayers for me, that it may be continued and increased; that he may ever dwell in my soul, consecrate all its powers and engage all its services; that I may be fitted for the whole of his will; in affliction or prosperity, in life or death, in time or eternity. I want above all things in the world, to be brought to greater nearness to God, and to walk more constantly and closely with him."——"O, could I spend more of my time in catechizing children, in exhorting heads of families and addressing to young people; and more in meditating on the things of God in my retirement, without books, without papers, under a deeper and more affecting sense of God, and receiving vital communications of grace and strength immediately from him, methinks, I should be happy. But I am sadly incumbered. If God hath ever made me useful to you, give him the glory. I am one of the least of his children and yet a child; and this is my daily joy. Indeed I feel my love to him increase; I struggle forward towards him, and look at him, as it were, sometimes with tears of love, when in the midst of the hurries of life, I cannot speak to him otherwise than by an ejaculation."

CHAP. IX.

His last Sickness and Death.

IT is an observation of Solomon, that *the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more to the perfect day.* This was eminently verified in the subject of these papers. We have seen with what peculiar and unwearied diligence he applied himself, especially during his last years, to converse with God, to improve his graces, to serve his fellow-christians and train up his soul for the work and felicity of heaven: And we are now to take a view of the happy effect of this pious care and diligence, in the peace of mind and holy joy, which shed a distinguished lustre on the concluding scenes of his life.

In December, 1750, he went to St. Albans, to preach a funeral sermon for his friend and father Dr. Samuel Clark. In that journey he unhappily contracted a cold, which hung upon him through the remainder of the winter. On the advance of the spring, it considerably abated, but returned again with great violence in the summer. His physicians and friends advised him to lay aside his public work for a while, and apply

himself entirely to the use of proper medicines and exercise for the removal of his complaint. But he could not be persuaded to comply with the former part of their advice. To be useless was worse than death to him. While he thought there was no immediate danger, he could not be prevailed upon to decline or lessen his delightful work, and was particularly desirous to complete his Family Expositor. His correspondents, and friends at home, plainly observed his great improvement in spirituality and a heavenly temper, the nearer he approached to his dissolution. He seemed to be got above the world; his affections were more strongly than ever set upon heaven, and he was daily breathing after immortality.

In some letters to his friends, about this time, he thus expresseth himself; "I bless God, earth is less and less to me; and I shall be very glad to have done with it once for all, as soon as it shall please my master to give me leave. Yet for him I would live and labour; and I hope, if such were his will, suffer too."——"I thank God, that I do indeed feel my affection to this vanishing world, dying and vanishing every day. I have long since *weighed it in the balances* and *found it wanting;* and my heart and hopes are above. Fain would I attain more lively views of glory. Fain would I feel more powerful attractions towards that world, where you and I, through grace, shall soon be; and in the mean time would be exerting myself more and more, to people that blessed, but neglected region."——"I am now intent upon having something done among the dissenters, in a more public manner, for propagating the gospel abroad, which lies near my heart. I wish to live to see this design brought into execution, at least into some forwardness; and then I should die the more chearfully. Should God spare my life, many opportunities of doing good in this respect may arise: But *to depart and be with Christ is far*, far, infinitely *better*. I desire the prayers of my friends in my present circumstances. I remember them in my poor way: But alas! what with my infirmities, and what with the hurries to which I am here [in London] peculiarly obnoxious, and the many affairs and interruptions, which are pressing upon me, my praying time is sadly contracted. *O that I had wings like a dove!* You know whither they would carry me. I feel nothing in myself at present, that should give me reason to apprehend immediate danger. But the obstinacy of my cough and its proneness to return upon every little provocation, gives me some alarm. Go on to pray for me, that my heart may be fixed upon God; that every motion and every word may be directed

by love to him and zeal for his glory; and leave me with him, as chearfully as I leave myself. He will do well with his servant according to his word. *Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without him*; and though I am indeed, I think, *less than the least of all saints*, I am nevertheless of *more value than many sparrows*. May you increase, while I decrease; and shine many years as a bright star in the Redeemer's hand, when I am set!"—He began his last will thus; "Whereas it is customary on these occasions to begin with commending the soul into the hands of God through Christ, I do it; not in mere form, but with sincerity and joy; esteeming it my greatest happiness, that I am taught and encouraged to do it, by that glorious gospel, which, having most assuredly believed, I have spent my life in preaching to others; and which I esteem an infinitely greater treasure than all my little worldly store, or possessions ten thousand times greater than mine."

The last time he administered the Lord's supper to his congregation at Northampton, was on June 2, 1751, after having preached from Hebrews xii. 23. *Ye are come—to the general assembly, and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven*, &c. At the conclusion of that service, he mentioned, with marks of uncommon pleasure, that view of Christ, given in the Revelation, as *holding the stars in his right-hand and walking among the candlesticks*; expressing his authority over ministers and churches, his right to dispose of them as he pleaseth, and the care he taketh of them. He dropped some hints of his own approaching dissolution, and spoke of taking leave of them with the greatest tenderness and affection. After this he spent some weeks in London, and the hurries and labours he went through there, contributed to increase his disorder.

Immediately after his return from London, on July 14, 1751, notwithstanding the earnest intreaties of his friends, he was determined to address his beloved flock once more from the pulpit. His discourse was well adapted to be, as he imagined it probably might be, (and as indeed it proved) a farewell sermon. His subject was, "Romans xiv. 8. *For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.* From whence he shewed, First, That it is essential to the character of true christians to be devoted to Christ in life and death;—to live to him, as his property, redeemed ones and servants,—to seek his glory and the advancement of his kingdom. It is peculiarly the duty of christian ministers to live thus;—to direct their hearers to Christ as the foundation of

their hope—engage them to live by faith in him—and promote the great end of his undertaking and love.——They are also devoted to Christ in death; as—they are sincerely willing to die for Christ, if, in the course of providence, they should be called to it—as they are desirous, that Christ may be honoured by their dying behaviour,—recommending him to those that are about them,—and solemnly resigning their own souls into his hands.——He shewed, Secondly, That it is the happiness of true christians to be the care of Christ in life and death.—— He will prolong their lives and continue their usefulness, as long as he sees it good:—he will also take care of them in death,— adjusting the circumstances of it, so as to subserve the purposes of his glory—granting them all necessary supports in death— and after that, giving them eternal life and raising them up at the last day.——From hence he inferred, that it is of the greatest importance for all to enquire, whether this be their character; and that it becomes true christians to maintain a noble indifference with regard to life or death." I mention these hints, that the reader may perceive, what was the frame of his mind under his decay, and how desirous he was to bear his testimony, even to the last, to the honour of his master, and to promote the zeal and consolation of his fellow servants, and particularly his pupils.

The last public service, in which he was engaged, was at the ordination of the Reverend Mr. Adams at Bewdley in Worcestershire, July 18. His pale countenance and languid trembling voice, shewed how unfit he was for the service at that time: But he had promised his assistance some weeks before, and was unwilling to be absent or unemployed on so solemn and edifying an occasion. Thus he wrote to a friend concerning his intended journey thither; "I am at present much indisposed. My cough continues, and where it may end God only knows. I will however struggle hard to come to Bewdley, that I may be fitter to serve Christ, if I live, or to go and enjoy him, if I die. I can write but little; help me with your prayers. My unworthiness is greater even than my weakness, though that be great. Here is my comfort, the *strength of Christ* may perhaps be made *perfect in weakness*." From Bewdley he went to Shrewsbury, where he spent several weeks*, for the convenience of air, exercise, and an entire recess from business and company; and by this he seemed a little recruited. While he was there, in this languishing state, he received many letters from his friends, expressing their high

* At the house of his friend Mr. Orton.

esteem and affection for him, deep concern for this threatning illness, and assuring him of their earnest prayers for his recovery. I venture to insert one at large from the Reverend Mr. John Barker, late minister of the gospel in London, as I imagine every pious, tender-hearted reader will be pleased with it.

"L——— N——— and Barker are too nearly interested in that precious life, which now appears in danger of being cut off in the midst of its days, to hear of its waste and languishing without great concern and fervent prayer to God. How your letter affected my heart in public, your friends are witness: But what I felt for my dear brother and the ministers and churches of Christ, God and myself only know. I will not now say, Why did you spend so fast? Why did you not spare yourself a little sooner? I will rather heartily thank you, that you use all the means you can to repair your frame, and restore and prolong your usefulness. It is the kindest thing you can do, and the highest instance of friendship you can now shew us; and I acknowledge your goodness to us in this point with tears of joy. Consent and chuse to stay with us a while longer, my dear friend, if it please God. This is not only needful to Northampton and its adjacent towns and villages, but desirable to us all, and beneficial to our whole interest. Stay, Doddridge, O, stay, and strengthen our hands, whose shadows grow long. Fifty is but the height of vigour, usefulness and honour. Don't take leave abruptly. Providence hath not directed thee yet on whom to drop thy mantle. Who shall instruct our youth, fill our vacant churches, animate our associations, and diffuse a spirit of piety, moderation, candour and charity through our villages and churches; and a spirit of prayer and supplication into our towns and cities, when thou art removed from us? especially who shall unfold the sacred oracles, teach us the meaning and use of our bibles, rescue us from the bondage of systems, party-opinions, empty, useless speculations, and fashionable forms and phrases; and point out to us the simple, intelligible, consistent, uniform religion of our Lord and Saviour? Who shall——But I am silenced by the voice of him who says, '*Shall I not do what I will with my own?* Is it not my prerogative to take and leave, as seemeth me good? I demand the liberty of disposing of my own servants at my own pleasure. He hath laboured more abundantly. His times are in my hand. He hath not slept as do others. He hath risen to nobler heights than things below. He hopes to inherit glory. He hath laboured for that, which endureth to eternal life; labour, which

the more it abounds, the more it exalts and magnifies its object, and the more effectually answers and secures its end. It is yours to wait and trust, mine to dispose and govern. On me be the care of ministers and churches.—With me is *the residue of the Spirit.*—Both the vineyard and the labourers are mine. I set them to work, and when I please, I call them and give them their hire.'

"With these thoughts, my passions subside,—my mind is softened and satisfied, I resign thee, myself and all, to God, saying, *Thy will be done!*——But now for the wings of faith and contemplation. Let me take thy hand, my dear brother, and walk a turn or two in yonder spacious regions. Yes, it is so: we read it in the book of God, that *Word of truth and gospel of our salvation*—that *as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* The one ruined his posterity by sin; the other raiseth his seed to immortality. This poisoned the dart and inflamed the wound of death; but Jesus Christ redeemeth us from this captivity. See, thou christian minister, thou friend of my bosom and faithful servant of God, see the important period, when the surprising signs and descending inhabitants of heaven, proclaim the second coming of our divine Saviour! The heavens open and disclose his radiant glory. Hear the awakening trump. See, the dead in Christ arise glorious and immortal—leave corruption, weakness and dishonour behind them, and behold their Lord and head seated on his throne of judgment, attended and surrounded with the ministers of his power and pleasure, and shining in all the fullness of celestial glory; and not only see but share his victory and lustre, —partake of his image and influence. And behold the demolished fabric reared again, stately and ornamented, shining and illustrious, permanent and durable, to demonstrate how entirely death is vanquished, all its ruins repaired; and what was once meat for worms is now a companion of angels: for *when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality*, every eye will be fastened on the mighty conqueror, and every voice and harp be tuned for that transporting song, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?* Yes, Doddridge, it is so. The fruit of our Redeemer's sufferings and victory is the entire and eternal destruction of sin and death. And is it not a glorious destruction? a most blessed ruin? No enemy so formidable, no tyranny so bitter, no fetters so heavy and galling, no prison so dark and dismal, but they are vanquished and disarmed; the unerring dart is blunted and broken—the prison pulled down and rased. Our Lord is risen, as *the first fruits of them that slept.*——How glad should I be

to hear, that God is pleased to prolong thy life on earth, to declare these glorious truths and teach us to improve them! In this, your friends with you, and many more in every place, join, and make it our common petition to the great Disposer of all events. Use every means you can for the recovery of your health, for the sake of your friends, among whom is your faithful and affectionate, J. Barker."——The Doctor was so affected and melted into tears of gratitude and joy, with the friendship this letter expressed, and the divine consolations, which it administered, that I was apprehensive his tender frame would have sunk under it.

As the autumn advanced, his physicians judged it proper for him to try the waters of Bristol; and accordingly he went thither in August. Upon his arrival there, a worthy clergyman of the established church, with whom he had only a slight acquaintance, entertained him in the most hospitable manner and with a fraternal affection, till he could be accommodated with a lodging near the wells. The then bishop of Worcester, Dr. Maddox, paid him a friendly visit, and in the most obliging manner, offered to convey him to the wells in his chariot, at the stated times of drinking the water. His physicians at Bristol gave him little hope from the water; and he received their report of the great hazard of his case, which he desired them faithfully to give him, with that fortitude, resignation and chearfulness, which never forsook him to the last, in any place, or on any occasion. He here met with some of his friends, who were desirous to do all in their power to testify their regard for him; and he received unexpected assistance and offers of service from many persons entirely strangers to him, and from some too, who had entertained prejudices against him. They joined to express their high sense of his worth and the importance of his life; and their company and assistance were very seasonable to him in a strange place and in his afflicted condition.

Another circumstance, that contributed greatly to his comfort was, that providence directed him to a lodging in a family, where he was treated with uncommon civility, and a respect and tenderness, like that of a friend, rather than a stranger. Thus he writes from thence; "I have experienced since I came hither, this day in particular, the kind interposition of providence in raising me up some kind and generous friends in a place, where I expected to be a perfect stranger; especially a worthy nobleman, who as kindly interests himself about my health, as if he had been long my intimate friend. I am constantly attended by an excellent physician, who is now become,

through the divine goodness, to which I would trace up all such events, an affectionate friend; and I have the occasional advice of others; and they have all acted with the greatest generosity as well as tenderness, performing every friendly office in their power with much concern and assiduity."

While he continued at Bristol, some of the principal persons of his congregation came to visit him, with an affection not to be expressed; they brought him an assurance of the highest esteem and tender sympathy of his people and friends at home, and informed him that prayer was made by that church for him three evenings in every week; and that some other churches were engaged in the same work on his account. This afforded him great satisfaction and refreshment. He knew their prayers would not be, upon the whole, vain; though he considered his own case as desperate, and said, that unless God should interpose in such an extraordinary manner, as he had no reason to expect, he could not long continue in the land of the living. He ascribed, to the efficacy of the prayers of his friends, the composure and joy he felt in his own soul, and the preservation of his wife's health amidst incessant fatigue and concern, which he acknowledged as a singular blessing. But while the *outward man* was so sensibly *decaying* that he used to say to his friends, "*I die daily*," yet the *inward man was renewed day by day.*

The warmth of his devotion, zeal and friendship was maintained and increased. His physicians had directed him to speak and write as little as possible; but he could not satisfy himself without sometimes writing a few lines to some of his friends, to whom he could write in short hand without much fatigue: And the frame of his heart, in the views of death, will appear by these extracts from them. "I bless God, I have the powerful supports of christianity; nor is it any grievance of heart to me, but on the contrary, an unspeakable pleasure, that I have spent my life among the protestant dissenters, and sacrificed to honour, liberty and conscience, those considerations, which persons devoted to avarice and ambition think great and irresistible." To a friend at whose house he had spent some weeks, he thus writes; "I thank you for all the tender and affectionate friendship, which attended me, while I was with you, at home and abroad, to the throne of grace and every where else: I shall never forget it; my God will never forget it. He will be in a superior degree mindful of your tears. May he reward you by richer and more abundant communications of his spirit, give you every thing that can conduce to your earthly happiness, and especially all that can anticipate that of heaven! Be

assured, I will take every precaution to live; and the rather, that I may, as far as in me lies, comfort and chear your heart. I see indeed no hope of my recovery; yet *my heart rejoiceth in* my *God* and in *my Saviour;* and I call him, under this failure of every thing else, its *strength and everlasting portion.* I must now thank you for your heart-reviving letter, to strengthen my faith, to comfort my soul and assist in *swallowing up death in victory.* God hath indeed been wonderfully good to me. But I am *less than the least of his mercies;* less than the least hope of his children. Adored be his grace for whatever it hath wrought by me! And blessed be you of the Lord, for the strong consolations you have been the instrument of administering! Let me desire you to write again, and pour out your heart freely, with all its strong cordial sentiments of christianity. Nothing will give me greater joy. What a friend will you be in heaven! How glad shall I be to welcome you there, after a long, a glorious course of service, to increase the lustre of your crown! May you long shine, like a sun upon the earth, with your light, warmth and influence, when there remain not any united particles of that poor wasting sinking frame, which enables this immortal spirit to call itself, your friend, in everlasting bonds! P. D."

As his strength daily decreased, he was advised, as the last resort in so threatening a disorder, to remove to a warmer climate for the winter. Thus he writes to a friend; "I have now an affair to mention to you, concerning which I desire your serious thoughts and earnest prayers for divine direction. My physicians and other friends here, are all of opinion, that there is one expedient, which may probably be of much greater and more lasting efficacy than the Bristol waters; and that is, a change of climate and spending the winter in a warmer country: And they all advise me to go to Lisbon. My wife will attend me with all heroic resolution. A thousand objections and fears arise. May I know the will of God, and the call of duty!"——A friend, that went to visit him, just before he left Bristol, wrote to a near relation this account of the state of his body, and of some expressions that dropped from him, during the visit; which, with the assistance of some others then present, he recollected and wrote down, as soon as they returned. "He coughs much, is hoarse, speaks inwardly with a low voice. He is affected with the loss of his voice, being desirous to preach Christ and speak for him, while he lives. He is preparing for a journey, through roads rendered exceedingly bad by much wet, to embark at Falmouth. My soul, saith he, is vigorous and healthy, notwithstanding the hastening decay of this frail and tottering body. It is not for the love of sun-shine or the variety of meats, that I desire life,

but, if it please God, that I may render him a little more service. It is a blessed thing to live above the fear of death, and I praise God, I fear it not. The means I am about pursuing to save life, so far as I am solely concerned, are, to my apprehension, worse than death. My profuse night-sweats are very weakening to my emaciated frame: But the most distressing nights to this frail body have been as the beginning of heaven to my soul. God hath, as it were, let heaven down upon me in those nights of weakness and waking. I am not suffered once to lose my hope. My confidence is, not that I have lived such or such a life, or served God in this or the other manner: I know of no prayer I ever offered, no service I ever performed, but there has been such a mixture of what was wrong in it, that instead of recommending me to the favour of God, I needed his pardon, through Christ, for the same. Yet he hath enabled me in sincerity to serve him. Popular applause was not the thing I sought. If I might be honoured to do good, and my heavenly Father might see his poor child attempting, though feebly and imperfectly, to serve him, and meet with his approving eye and commending sentence, *well done, good and faithful servant*,—this my soul regarded and was most solicitous for. I have no hope in what I have been or done. Yet I am full of confidence: And this is my confidence; there is *a hope set before me*: I have fled, I still *fly for refuge* to that hope. In him I trust; in him I have *strong consolation*, and shall assuredly be *accepted in this beloved* of my soul. The *spirit of adoption* is given me, enabling me to cry, *Abba, Father*. I have no doubt of my being a child of God, and that life and death, and all my present exercises, are directed in mercy, by my adored heavenly Father."

While he was deliberating on the scheme of going to Lisbon, his principal objection to it was, the great expence, that must necessarily attend it. He doubted in his own mind, whether, with so very precarious a hope of its being beneficial to him, he should pursue it; when his family, which, in case of his decease, would be but slenderly provided for, would suffer so much by the expence of his voyage. It will, I hope, appear to every considerate reader, a glorious circumstance in the Doctor's life, that it was sacrificed to the generous, disinterested service of his great master, and benevolence to mankind; that, with the advantages of a genius and qualifications, equal to the highest advancement in the establishment, and without being chargeable with want of economy, he should find himself under the painful necessity of preserving the little remainder of his life, by an expence, disproportionate to the provision made for his family, dear to him as his own life. He just hinted this cir-

cumstance to a clergyman of the church of England, (who, though he had no previous acquaintance with him, behaved in the most kind and respectful manner to him at Bristol,) as the principal reason why he demurred about the voyage, which his physicians and friends so warmly urged. This worthy and benevolent man, without the Doctor's knowledge, took an opportunity to express before a lady of considerable fortune, who was a dissenter, his esteem and respect for the Doctor, and the great concern it gave him, that a person, who did so much honour to christianity and the dissenting interest in particular, and who (as he was pleased to express himself) "if his conscience had not prevented, might have been in one of the first dignities of their church," should, on account of his circumstances, be discouraged from taking a step, on which perhaps his life depended: And he added, that he thought it would be an everlasting reproach to the dissenters, as a body, if they who knew of his circumstances, did not take some immediate and vigorous methods to remove his difficulty. This gentleman had no sooner given the hint, and set a handsome precedent, than it was chearfully pursued; and the generosity of the Doctor's friends there and in other places, who knew of his embarrassment, equalled his wants and warmest wishes. This seasonable and unexpected supply was greatly enhanced to him, and the hand of providence appeared more evident in it, as it was procured by so unthought-of an instrument, and without his own desire or knowledge.

A friend in London*, who had for many years generously managed his small temporal concerns, thus wrote to him upon this occasion; "Your friends here will think there is cause either to blame themselves, or you, if the expence of your present expedition (so unavoidable as it seems to be) should create you an hour's uneasiness. Many of them, you are sensible, desire to be ranked among the disciples of Christ; and it exceeds not the humility he hath prescribed to the meanest of them, to aim at a share in a prophet's reward. Instead of selling what you have in the funds, I believe I shall be able, through the benevolence of your friends, to add to it, after having defrayed the expence of your voyage. Besides this, you go with a full gale of prayer; and I trust we shall stand ready, as it were, on the shore, to receive you back with shouts of praise: But it becomes us also to be prepared for a more awful event. O Sir, the time is hastening, when these ways of the Lord, which are now so unsearchable, shall appear to have been marked out

* Mr. Neal, whose kind offices to Dr. Doddridge's family were eminent and invariable.—K.

by the counsels of infinite wisdom; and we, who may be left longest to lean upon and support one another by turns, in this weary land, shall fix our feet on those everlasting hills, where our joys shall never leave us, nor our vigour ever fail us."

The Doctor was so affected with the extraordinary kindness of his friends, and his gratitude to heaven was so intense, that it was too much for his weakened frame, overwhelmed his spirits, and he could never speak of it, but with raptures of joy and thankfulness.——He thus writes to one of his friends upon this occasion; "It would amaze you, were I to enumerate the appearance of divine providence for us, in raising up for us many most affectionate friends, who have multiplied the instances of their civility, hospitality and liberality, in a manner that has been to me quite wonderful. This is a great encouragement to me to follow, where such a God seems evidently to lead, though it be into a temporary exile. Who would not trust and hope in him?" And to another; "I will freely acknowledge to you, I am not philosopher enough not to be grieved to think, how much of the little provision I had made for my family must be sunk by my voyage: and though I know how little this, in comparison, affects them, it toucheth me not the less. But I were the most inexcusable wretch on earth, if I could not trust my experienced, Almighty Friend, to take care of me and mine; especially after some late instances of his astonishing goodness, in raising me up friends, and truly, important ones, whose names a month ago were unknown to me."

Many other kind providences attended him at Bristol and in the view of his intended journey, which I must not particularly enumerate: But cannot omit, that a servant in the family, where he lodged, offered herself to attend him to Lisbon on very reasonable terms; whereas other infirm persons, intending the same voyage, had found it very difficult to procure one, even by very large offers; and that the learned Dr. Warburton, now Bishop of Gloucester, who honoured him with his friendship, in the most obliging manner procured an order from the post-office to the manager of the packet-boats at Falmouth to furnish him with the best accommodations for his voyage. During the Doctor's absence from home, and using the prescribed means for the restoration of his health, he often mentioned it to his friends as a singular happiness, that God had given him an assistant*, to whom he could chearfully consign the care of his academy and congregation, and (as he expresseth it in a letter

* The Reverend Mr. Samuel Clark, (Son of Dr. Clark of St. Albans) now minister of a congregation at Birmingham, to whom I take this opportunity of acknowledging myself much obliged for considerable assistance in this work.

to a friend from Bristol) " whose great prudence and wise disposition of affairs made him quite easy as to both."

It may answer my leading design, before I proceed in the narrative, to observe, that during all his fatigue of travelling, wearisome nights and weeks of languishing, patience had its perfect work. No complaining word was uttered by him ; no mark of an uneasy discontented mind seen in him. A heavenly calm dwelt in his breast. He seemed continually pleased and chearful ; expressed in obliging terms his thankfulness to the meanest servant, that shewed him any kindness or gave him any assistance, and dropped some pious hints, that might be serviceable to them in their best interests. No one, however fond of life, could be more punctually observant of the regimen prescribed to him : and in this he acted from a principle of duty, and a conviction that in past instances he had been too regardless of his life and health. He acknowledged this to a young minister of a tender constitution, with whom he had an interview at Bristol, and earnestly recommended to him the care of his own health, in order to prolong his usefulness. The most painful circumstance in all his illness was, that as speaking was hurtful to him, his physicians had forbid him conversation. He submitted as much as possible to this piece of self-denial, and seldom opened his lips, but to express his gratitude and affection to his friends, and his thanksgiving to his heavenly Father, for all those blessings, with which he was so richly furnished both for body and soul. He never, in his most painful and declining state, expressed any regret, but what arose from that generous ardour, which filled his soul, and the strong desire he felt to testify, by longer and more distinguished services, his gratitude and love to his divine master. In this view he would sometimes express his desires of the recovery of his health ; but these desires were bounded by the meekest and most entire submission to the divine will.

When his friends reminded him of his fidelity, diligence and zeal in his master's service, even to his power, and, as he then felt and they saw, beyond his power, he used to reply, " I am nothing, all is to be ascribed to the free grace of God." He often told them, that he could not be sufficiently thankful, for the honour and happiness God had conferred upon him, in that he had been enabled sincerely to endeavour, though very imperfectly, to do him and his glorious cause some little service in the world ; that this, when compared with his delightful hopes of that future eternal reward, with which he had been so often animated and cheared, filled him with such a sense of his infinite

obligations to his heavenly Father, and to the dying love of his blessed Redeemer, that all he had done, or ever could do, to serve his cause in the world, appeared to him as nothing, yea, less than nothing. Nor did the meanest and most useless christian, with greater humility renounce all self-dependence and every shadow of merit. He often professed, that his only hope and joyful expectation of pardon and acceptance were absolutely founded on the mercy of God, through the merits and intercession of his Redeemer, that it was a great satisfaction to him to reflect, that, through the whole course of his ministry, it had been his constant concern to direct and recommend his hearers to this only foundation, on which, he then felt, he could so safely and joyfully trust his own soul. He often professed his cordial belief of the truth, importance and excellency of those doctrines, which it had been the business and delight of his life to explain, illustrate and enforce: and it was his fervent prayer, that God would, by his spirit, lead the minds of ministers into a just knowledge of them; and give their eyes to see, and their hearts to feel, their reality, power and sweetness, in the same manner as he did. What doctrines he referred to, his writings sufficiently shew.——But it is time to return to the narrative.

He left Bristol, Sept. 17th, and after a fatiguing journey of ten days, occasioned partly by the badness of the season and roads, and partly by his great weakness, he arrived at Falmouth, in Cornwall. There he was received in the kindest manner by Dr. Turner, to whom he had been recommended by his physicians at Bristol and Bath: In his house he was generously entertained while he continued there, and he also recommended him to the care of his nephew Dr. Cantley, at Lisbon. His most painful and threatning symptoms had been suspended during his journey and stay at Falmouth, but returned with greater violence the night before he sailed: So that Mrs. Doddridge thought it necessary to propose, that he should either return home, or stay a while longer there; to which, having some hope from a change of climate, he returned this short answer, "The die is cast, and I chuse to go." It shewed no small degree of faith and courage in him to venture, amidst such weakness and through so many perils, on such a voyage; especially into so bigotted a country as Portugal; where, if his profession were known, and his writings had been seen, by any of the romish priests (as they probably might, being in several hands at Lisbon) it might have been attended with deplorable consequences to him and his friends. In this undertaking, he acted by the unanimous advice of the most competent judges; he had earnestly sought the direction of providence, was deter-

mined at all adventures to follow it; and he entertained some feeble hope of its efficacy.

He thus expresseth himself in a letter to a friend from Falmouth; "I am upon the whole, better than could be expected after such a journey. Let us thank God and take courage. We may yet know many chearful days. We shall at least know (why do I say, at least?) one joyful one, which shall be eternal." After having written to another of his correspondents from thence, upon necessary business, he adds; "I have trespassed a great deal on your time and a little on my own strength. I say, a little; for when writing to such a friend, as I seem less absent from him, it gives me new spirits and soothes my mind agreeably. Oh, when shall we meet in that world, where we shall have nothing to lament, and nothing to fear, for ourselves or each other, or any dear to us! Let us think of this, as a momentary state, and aspire more ardently after the blessings of that. If I survive my voyage, a line shall tell you how I bear it. If not, all will be well; and (as good Mr. Howe says) I hope I shall embrace the wave, that, when I intended Lisbon, should land me in heaven. I am more afraid of doing what is wrong, than of dying."——Much civility was shewn him at Falmouth by several persons, to whom his friends had wrote for that purpose. He parted from them with the utmost gratitude and tenderness, and went on board the packet on Monday, September 30th. As its captain did not go this voyage, he had the convenience of his cabin, which was a peculiar comfort and advantage to him in his declining state.

No sooner had the vessel sailed, but the new and wonderful scene which opened upon him, the soft air and fresh breezes of the sea, gave him new life and spirits. The sea-sickness, which almost incapacitated his wife and servant from giving him any attendance and assistance, was so favourable to him, that he needed them less than before. The captain's cabin was to him a *bethel, as the house of God, and the gate of heaven.* There, in an easy chair, he generally sat the greatest part of the day. He several times said to Mrs. Doddridge, "I cannot express to you what a morning I have had: Such delightful and transporting views of the heavenly world, is my Father now indulging me with, as no words can express." There appeared such sacred gratitude and joy in his countenance, as often reminded her of those lines in one of his hymns, No. 71.

When death o'er nature shall prevail,
And all its powers of language fail,
Joy through my swimming eyes shall break,
And mean the thanks I cannot speak.

The vessel was unhappily becalmed some days in the Bay of Biscay; and the weather proved so intensely hot, that his colliquative sweats returned, attended with such faintness, as threatned his speedy dissolution. But providence yet lengthened out the feeble thread of life. When the vessel came to the desired haven, and was waiting for the usual ceremonies before it could enter, the fineness of the day, the softness of the air, and the delightful prospects that surrounded him, gave him a fresh flow of strength and spirits, He went on deck and staid about two hours which afforded him such sensible refreshment, as raised a flattering hope of his recovery.

He landed at Lisbon, on Lord's-day, October 13th. The next day he wrote to his assistant at Northampton, and gave him a short account of his voyage, the magnificent appearance of Lisbon from the sea, and what he observed in passing through it; which shewed the composure and chearfulness of his mind: And after mentioning his great weakness and danger, he adds; "Nevertheless, I bless God, the most undisturbed serenity continues in my mind, and my strength holds proportion to my day. I still hope and trust in God and joyfully acquiesce in all he may do with me. When you see my dear friends of the congregation, inform them of my circumstances, and assure them, that I chearfully submit myself to God. If I desire life may be restored, it is chiefly, that it may be employed in serving Christ among them; and that I am enabled by faith to look upon death, as an *enemy that shall be destroyed;* and can chearfully leave my dear Mrs. Doddridge a widow in this strange land, if such be the appointment of our heavenly Father. I hope I have done my duty, and *the Lord do, as seemeth good in his sight.*"

At Lisbon he was kindly received and entertained at the house of Mr. David King, an English merchant. His mother was one of the Doctor's congregation at Northampton; and he had now an opportunity, which he little expected, but chearfully embraced, of repaying the many services, which the Doctor had done for his relations at Northampton. In this worthy family he found the most cordial friendship, and every desireable accommodation to alleviate his disorder. Here he met with Dr. Watts's treatise on "The Happiness of Separate Spirits," and told his wife, with the greatest joy, that he had unexpectedly found that blessed book; and in reading that book, Dr. Watts's Hymns, and especially the sacred volume, he used to employ himself as much as his strength would admit. Still his mind enjoyed a delightful calm, full of joy and thankfulness, which was often expressed by his words and always by his

looks. Here he found a family related to Mrs. Doddridge, and other kind friends, who having heard of his character and received letters of recommendation, sent, unknown to him, by his friends in England, shewed him all the civility in their power, and seemed to strive who should discover the most assiduous and tender regard. Their company gave him pleasure, though mingled with this painful circumstance, that he could not converse with them, as he would have done. The Reverend Mr. Williamson, then chaplain to the British factory there, often visited him, with the temper and behaviour of the gentleman, the christian and the minister. About a week after his arrival, on Monday October 21st, he was removed into the country, a few miles from Lisbon, by the advice of his physician Dr. Cantley, who generously attended him, and refused the usual fees.

The rainy season, which in that climate usually sets in about the end of October, coming on with uncommon violence, cut off every hope his friends had entertained from air and exercise; and by the manner in which it affected him, seemed the appointed instrument of providence to cut short his few remaining days. On Thursday October 24th, a colliquative diarrhœa seized him, and soon exhausted his little strength. This night, which seemed the last of rational life, his mind continued in the same vigour, calmness and joy, which it had felt and expressed during his whole illness. Mrs. Doddridge still attended him; and he said to her, that he had been making it his humble and earnest request, that God would support and comfort her; —that it had been his desire, if it were the divine will, to stay a little longer upon earth to promote the honour and interest of his beloved Lord and Master; but now, the only pain he felt in the thought of dying was, his fear of that distress and grief, which would come upon her in case of his removal. After a short pause, he added; "But I am sure my heavenly Father will be with you.——It is a joy to me to think, how many friends and comforts you are returning to. So sure am I that God will be with you and comfort you, that I think my death will be a greater blessing to you, than ever my life hath been." He desired her to remember him in the most affectionate manner to his dear children, his flock and all his friends; and tell them of the gratitude his heart felt, and the blessings he wished for them all, on account of their kindness and goodness to him; nor was the family, where he lodged, nor even his own servant, forgotten in these expressions of his pious benevolence. Many devout sentiments and aspirations he uttered; but her heart was too much affected with his approaching change, to be able to recollect them. After lying still sometime, and being supposed asleep,

he told her he had been renewing his covenant engagements with God; and though he had not felt all that delight and joy, which he had so often done, yet he was sure the Lord was his God, and he had a chearful, well grounded hope, through the Redeemer, of being received to his everlasting mercy.

He lay in a gentle dose the following day, and continued so till about an hour before he died; when in his last struggle he appeared restless, fetched several deep sighs, and quickly after obtained his release from the burthen of the flesh, on Saturday, October 26th, 1751, O. S. about three o'clock in the morning: His soul mounting to that felicity, to which he had been long aspiring; and the prospect of which had given him such strong consolation, during his illness and decay. The concern and tears of his friends there, and even their servants upon this event, manifested their sense of his worth and of the greatness of the public loss.——It was a circumstance, which afforded much satisfaction to Mrs. Doddridge and her Lisbon friends, that he was not molested in these last scenes, as they feared a person of his profession and character would have been, by any officious and bigotted priests of the church of Rome; who, it is well known, are fond of intruding on such occasions, and have been the means of adding to the distress of many protestant families in Lisbon, and its environs, during the sickness, and at the death of their relations. When his body was opened as by his own desire it was, his lungs were found in so ulcerated a state, that it appeared wonderful to the physician, that both speaking and breathing were not more difficult and painful to him, and that he suffered so little acute pain to the last. In both respects his friends observed and acknowledged the loving-kindness of God to him and them.

He had often expressed his desire of being buried in his Meeting-place at Northampton, with his children and so many of his people and friends; but during his illness he spoke of it as a matter quite indifferent to him, and desired to be buried, wherever he should die; as he would not increase the distress of his afflicted consort. As it was found upon enquiry, that removing the body to England would have been attended with a very great expence, it was judged most prudent to decline it. Accordingly his remains were interred in the burying ground belonging to the British factory at Lisbon, with as much decency and respect, as circumstances and the place would admit. Most of the gentlemen of the factory attended his funeral, and did him honour at his death. On the following Lord's-day, Mr. Williamson, their chaplain, preached a funeral-sermon for him, from Timothy iv. 8. *Godliness is profitable unto all things, hav-*

ing promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. He gave him a high and honourable character, founded on what he had heard from many, of his worth, and seen of it, during the opportunities he had of conversing with him. A handsome monument was erected to his memory in his meeting-place at Northampton, at the expence of the congregation (who also made a generous present to his widow after her return) and the following epitaph was inscribed upon it, drawn up by his much esteemed friend Gilbert West, Esq. and L. L. D.

To the memory of
PHILIP DODDRIDGE, D. D.
Twenty-one years pastor of this church,
Director of a flourishing academy,
And author of many excellent writings;
By which
His pious, benevolent, and indefatigable zeal
To make men wise, good and happy,
Will far better be made known,
And perpetuated much longer,
Than by this obscure and perishable marble;
The humble monument, not of his praise,
But of their esteem, affection and regret,
Who knew him, lov'd him and lament him;
And who are desirous of recording,
In this inscription,
Their friendly but faithful testimony
To the many amiable and christian virtues,
That adorned his more private character;
By which, though dead, he yet speaketh,
And, still present in remembrance,
Forcibly, though silently, admonisheth
His once beloved and ever grateful flock.
He was born June 26, 1702,
And died October 26, 1751,
Aged 50.

Though Mrs. Doddridge returned without a friend and in these destitute and melancholy circumstances, yet she preserved the fortitude and serenity of her mind; and was, through the voyage and upon her return to her family, strengthened and supported beyond what could have been expected. Her friends could not but see and adore that kind providence, which sustained her amidst the excessive fatigue, anxiety and distress, which these scenes, especially the last, occasioned.* She yet

* What the state of her mind was, is finely represented in a letter from Lisbon, a few days after the Doctor's decease.

Lisbon, Nov. 11, N. S. 1751.

"My dear Children,

How shall I address you under this awful and melancholy providence! I would fain say something to comfort you. And I hope God will enable me to say something that may alleviate your deep distress. I went out in a firm dependence, that,

lives, to bear witness to the power, faithfulness and goodness of God in carrying her through them all, and hearing the many

if infinite wisdom was pleased to call me out to duties and trials as yet unknown, he would grant me those superior aids of strength that would support and keep me from fainting under them; persuaded that there was no distress or sorrow into which he could lead me, under which his gracious and all-sufficient arm could not support me. He has not disappointed me, nor suffered the heart and eyes directed to him to fail. 'God all-sufficient, and my only hope,' is my motto: let it be yours. Such indeed have I found him; and such I verily believe, you will find him too in this time of deep distress.

"Oh my dear children, help me to praise him! Such supports, such consolations, such comforts has he granted to the meanest of his creatures, that my mind, at times, is held in perfect astonishment, and is ready to burst into songs of praise, under its most exquisite distress.

"As to outward comforts, God has withheld no good things from me, but has given me all the assistance, and all the supports, that the tenderest friendship was capable of affording me, and which I think my dear Northampton friends could not have exceeded. Their prayers are not lost. I doubt not but I am reaping the benefit of them, and hope that you will do the same.

"I am returned to good Mr. King's. Be good to poor Mrs. King. It is a debt of gratitude I owe for the great obligations I am under to that worthy family here. Such a solicitude of friendship was surely hardly ever known, as I meet with here. I have the offers of friendship more than I can employ; and it gives a real concern to many here that they cannot find out a way to serve me. These are great honours conferred on the dear deceased, and great comforts to me. It is impossible to say how much these mercies are endeared to me, as coming in such an immediate manner from the divine hand. To his name be the praise and glory of all!

"And now, my dear children, what shall I say to you? Ours is no common loss. I mourn the best of husbands and of friends, removed from this world of sin and sorrow, to the regions of immortal bliss and light. What a glory! What a mercy is it that I am enabled with my thoughts to pursue him there! You have lost the dearest and the best of parents, the guide of your youth! and whose pleasure it would have been to have introduced you into life with great advantages. Our loss is great indeed! But I really think the loss the public has sustained is still greater. But God can never want instruments to carry on his work. Yet, let us be thankful that God ever gave us such a friend; that he has continued him so long with us. Perhaps, if we had been to have judged, we should have thought that we nor the world could never less have spared him than at the present time. But I see the hand of heaven, the appointment of his wise providence, in every step of this awful dispensation. It is his hand that has put the bitter cup into ours. And what does he now expect from us, but a meek, humble, entire submission to his will? We know this is our duty. Let us pray for those aids of his Spirit, which can only enable us to attain it. A father of the fatherless is God in his holy habitation. As such may your eyes be directed to him! He will support you. He will comfort you. And that he may, is not only my daily but hourly prayer.

"We have never deserved so great a good as that we have lost. And let us remember, that the best respect we can pay to his memory, is to endeavour as far as we can to follow his example, to cultivate those amiable qualities that rendered him so justly dear to us, and so greatly esteemed by the world. Particularly I would recommend this to my dear P. May I have the joy to see him acting the part worthy the relation to so amiable and excellent a parent, whose memory, I hope, will ever be valuable and sacred to him, and to us all! Under God, may he be a comfort to me, and a support to the family! Much depends on him. His loss I think peculiarly great. But I know an all-sufficient God can over-rule it as the means of the greatest good to him.

"It is impossible for me to tell you how tenderly my heart feels for you all!

prayers of her beloved companion and his many friends for her. It was an addition to her loss of him, though almost sunk in the greatness of that, that by his dying abroad, she lost a considerable annuity, which he had provided for her in case of widowhood; and to which she would otherwise have been entitled. It was happy that he never knew this would be the consequence, or it would have increased his embarrassment. Upon her return, a subscription was opened for her, chiefly in London, and in a great measure conducted by that generous friend, mentioned above as managing the Doctor's temporal concerns, and who hath since distinguished himself by all the offices of the wisest and most affectionate friendship for his family. This subscription met with all desirable encouragement, and the whole amounted to a sum, which more than indemnified her for the loss of her annuity. Besides this, she received several other handsome presents, sent as subscriptions to the Family Expositor, from persons of rank, both among the clergy and laity of the establishment. The generous and obliging manner, in which this whole affair was managed, the great honour which it reflected on the Doctor's memory, as well as so signal an interposition of providence for the better support of his family, could not fail of giving her the most sensible pleasure and comfort under her affliction; and it is never recollected by her, but with sentiments of the warmest gratitude. Nor can I satisfy myself to conceal the kindness of his brethren in the neighbourhood of Northampton, and those of his pupils who had entered upon the ministry, who supplied his congregation, during his absence

How much I long to be with you to comfort you and assist you. Indeed, you are the only inducements I now have left to wish for life, that I may do what little is in my power to form and guide your tender years. For this purpose I take all possible care of my health. I eat, sleep, and converse at times with a tolerable degree of chearfulness. You, my dears, as the best return you can make me, will do the same, that I may not have sorrow upon sorrow. The many kind friends you have around you, I am sure, will not be wanting in giving you all the assistance and comfort that is in their power. My kindest salutations attend them all.

"I hope to leave this place in about fourteen or twenty days. But the soonest I can reach Northampton will not be in less than six weeks, or two months time. May God be with you, and give us though a mournful, yet a comfortable meeting! For your sakes I trust my life will be spared. And, I bless God, my mind is under no painful anxiety as to the difficulties and dangers of the voyage.

"The winds and the waves are in his hands, to whom I resign myself, and all that is dearest to me. I know I shall have your prayers, and those of my dearest friends with you.

"Farewell my dearest children! I am your afflicted, but most sincere friend, and ever affectionate mother,

"M. DODDRIDGE."

K.

and for half a year after his death, that the salary might be continued to his family for that time.*

His pupils remained together till the next vacation, when the academy was removed to Daventry near Northampton; where it still continues, in a very flourishing state, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Caleb Ashworth, whom the Doctor had, in his will, expressly recommended as a proper person to succeed him in the care of it, and (as he there expressed it) "perpetuate those schemes which I had formed for the public service, the success of which is far dearer to me than my life." His worthy successor hath been instrumental in training up many young ministers, who have done honour to their tutor, and proved very acceptable and useful to the congregations, over which they have been called to preside.

Soon after the Doctor's death, a poem to his memory was published by one of his pupils,† which met with good acceptance in the world. I have his consent to republish it at the close of this work, and I hope it will be esteemed an agreeable part of it.

Dr. Doddridge was rather above the middle stature, extremely thin and slender; and there appeared a remarkable sprightliness and vivacity in his countenance and manner, when engaged in conversation, as well as in the pulpit, which commanded a general attention.‡——He left four children; a son, who is an attorney at law; and three daughters; the eldest married to Mr. Humphreys, an attorney in Tewksbury, Gloucestershire; the others single. And may they inherit all their father's virtues, and the many blessings which he besought for them! §

* Dr. Doddridge's funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Orton, who was in every view the properest person for that service. On what day it was delivered does not appear from the copy now lying before me. The text was 1 Cor. xv. 54. and the words, "Death is swallowed up in victory." In a short time the discourse was published, and had an extensive circulation, under the title of "The Christian's Triumph over Death." It has since been annexed to the three volumes of the Doctor's Sermons and religious tracts. Mr. Orton did not enter largely into the character of his reverend and beloved friend, having then probably formed the design of writing his life.—K.

† The author was Mr. Henry Moore, who afterwards settled in Devonshire, of which county he is a native, and who is now a dissenting minister at Leskard, in Cornwall. By his friends he is known not only to be an ingenious poet, but a sound scholar, especially in biblical criticism.—K.

‡ His deportment in company was strikingly polite, affable, and agreeable; and in conversation he greatly excelled; his discourse being at once instructive and entertaining, and not unfrequently rising to the splendid.—K.

§ It was a happy circumstance, that at the time of Dr. Doddridge's illness, and decease, he had for his assistant in the academy, Mr. Samuel Clark, the son of his friend Dr. Clark. In this gentleman were united wisdom, knowledge, and an uncommon equanimity and steadiness of temper. Indeed, though very young, he

Thus have I endeavoured, in the best manner I was able, to give the public an account of those circumstances in Dr. Doddridge's life, temper and character, which appeared to me most important and instructive. * I have, in the preface to this work, anticipated some things, which might properly have been added as the conclusion of the whole. I shall therefore content myself with expressing my chearful hope, that my readers are deeply sensible how excellent and honourable such a life, as the Doctor led, must be in itself; and what constant satisfaction and pleasure he must have enjoyed, from such a course of uniform, active services for the honour of his Lord and the interest of religion, and from the success which attended them; especially from the prospect of that glorious reward, which was laid up for him in heaven; and I hope they will be excited and animated, by this conviction, to emulate his excellencies and follow his steps, as far as their respective abilities, stations and circumstances in life will admit. I most heartily wish them this felicity: And I doubt not, but if they already possess it or are aspiring to it, they will join with me in entreating *the Lord of the harvest* to send forth more such faithful *labourers into his harvest*, and to pour out more of the same spirit on those who are already employed in it. It comforteth me, upon a review of this work, that I have, through the whole of it, sincerely consulted the glory of God, the advancement of real religion, and the best interests of my fellow christians, especially my brethren in the ministry; and that "it is the happiness of great wisdom and goodness (I had almost said, it is a part of its reward) to be entertained and edified, by the writings of those, who are much its inferiors, and most readily to exercise an indulgence, which itself least needs."

was well qualified to have been chosen to succeed Dr. Doddridge in the office of principal tutor; but this his modesty would not have permitted; and, upon the whole, it was undoubtedly proper that a man of more advanced life should be appointed.—K.

* Upon the whole, Dr. Doddridge was not only a great man, but one of the most excellent and useful christians, and christian ministers that ever existed.—K.

A POEM

TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE REVEREND

P. DODDRIDGE, D. D.

LONG have the Muses seen their sacred lays
Debas'd and mourn'd their prostituted praise.
While servile bards profane their heav'nly flame
To give ambition's fools and madmen fame;
While round the tyrant's brows, in gore embru'd,
Their weeping laurels blush with orphan's blood;
Neglected virtue's humble hero dies,
The friend of man, the fav'rite of the skies,
With not a bard the fatal blow to mourn,
And not a bay to shade his hallow'd urn.
O would their raptur'd sons exalt their art,
To touch, in virtue's cause, the gen'rous heart,
And pay to worth their tributary praise,
Doddridge, thy name should grace their noblest lays!
For thee would warble ev'ry verse divine,
And ev'ry voice, and ev'ry lyre, be thine.

When comets shoot their wild eccentric fire,
We dread their progress, and with pain admire;
When lightnings flash along the livid sky,
Trembling we gaze, and, while they shine, we die;
Ev'n such are heroes, by just heav'n design'd
To scourge the guilty madness of mankind.
Virtues like thine, serene as vernal day,
Pour on the world a mild and healing ray:
They charm, with modest majesty, the sight,
Chear the sad soul of care, and beam around delight.

O ever-honour'd, ever-dear, adieu!
How many tender names are lost in you!
Friend! father! tutor! in whose ample mind
All the ten thousand streams of science join'd.
If ardent prayers, if flowing sorrows shed
In all the bitterness of soul, could plead,
Our pray'rs, blest Doddridge, had revers'd thy doom,
And tears of thousands wept thee from the tomb.
How mute the music of that charming tongue,
On which so oft our rapt attention hung!
Where's now the vivid wit, the pleasing art,
The force of reason, and the friendly heart,
Whose temper'd pow'rs inform'd the social feast,
And gave the mind a more refin'd repast?
Who to the temple of eternal truth
Shall guide with skilful care our wand'ring youth;
O'er darken'd science shed unclouded day,
And strew with flow'ry sweets her thorny way?
Quench'd is our prophet's fire;—those lips no more
Religion's pure and sacred treasures pour,
To holy raptures wake the languid frame,
And through the breast diffuse celestial flame.

No more o'er guilty minds he shakes the rod,
Arm'd with the terrors of his awful God;
While chill'd with horror starts the conscious soul,
And hears appall'd th' avenging thunders roll,
Sees visionary lightnings round her glow,
And trembles o'er the gulph, that burns below.

Angels that from their sphery thrones descend
To guide the meek, the friendless to befriend,
To warm with holy flames the pious breast,
And lull the cares of innocence to rest,
Oft saw thee emulate their gen'rous part,
To turn to piety the wand'ring heart;
Unwearied, stedfast, bold in virtue's cause,
And by example best enforce her laws;
Ardent to succour want, console distress,
Thy wish, thy labour, thy delight to bless;
And from their stations look'd with pleasure down
On worth, allied so nearly to their own.

Her bays each science scatters on thy bier;
Each social virtue drops the friendly tear;
Beneath a mould'ring temple's awful shade,
Among the solemn nodding ruins laid,
Religion weeps; her bosom swell'd with care
Heaves the sad sigh, half yielding to despair:
But cheerful faith sustains her drooping head,
And whispers comfort to the fainting maid.
But ah! what pow'r of language can express
Thy widow'd consort's woe? What keen distress
Tore all her heart-strings, when thy trembling sight
Snatch'd a fond, farewell-glance, and clos'd in night?
When the felt pulse, that at her touch before
Beat with a fuller tide, now throbb'd no more?
In foreign lands abandon'd, and alone,
She heard a darling husband's parting groan;
No children there receiv'd his last command,
Wept round the couch and kiss'd his dying hand;
No sad domestic bore the sable bier;
No mournful pupil pour'd the tender tear;
No soothing friend to minister relief,
And by dividing mitigate her grief:
She solitary brooded o'er her care.
Her only refuge plac'd in heav'n and prayer.
And when her native country to regain,
She measured back the wide extended main,
As the fleet vessel flew before the wind,
How many a melting look she turn'd behind!
How, till in undistinguish'd vapour lost,
Caught each faint glimpse of the receding coast!
Where now, for ever from her eyes remov'd,
Lie the best relics of the man she lov'd.
That dear sad sight she never more must view,
Her longing eyes have look'd their last adieu:

That dear sad sight she wishes now in vain,
While ocean rolls unnumber'd waves between.

Yet curb the fond excesses of thy grief,
And in religion seek a sure relief.
Heav'n, gracious still, our real bliss befriends,
Is kind alike in what he takes, or lends;
To him indulgent, snatch'd the saint on high,
Approv'd mature for glory and the sky;
To thee indulgent, gave to taste of woe,
And copious bid the streams of sorrow flow,
To make the gen'rous seeds of virtue shoot,
And feed and ripen her immortal fruit.
Thus rushing down the skies, the kindly rains
Give beauty to the groves and plenty to the plains.

Death not to him a messenger of woe,
Shook his grim horrors from his gloomy brow;
And through his mournful vales and caves of night
Attendant faith diffus'd a heav'nly light;
She bid in vision to his ravish'd eyes
A thousand shining scenes of glory rise;
The flaming guards, refulgent from afar;
The fiery coursers, and the golden car.
Think, that you see the radiant prophet soar
To those blest regions, where he sighs no more;
Where led in triumph to the star-crown'd throne,
Religion smiling hails her fav'rite son;
Bids the victorious garland grace his brows,
While heav'n re-echos round the loud applause.
Then stop the tear, nor sorrow for the blest,
But with his fair example fire thy breast:
His worth still lives; that living worth regard,
And with like virtue seek the same reward.

Thrice happy spirit! while you praise above
A smiling God, and sing a Saviour's love,
Before the throne with bending cherubs stand,
Or burn a seraph 'midst the flame-rob'd band;
Or the great Parent tracing through the sky
From world to world, from sphere to sphere you fly,
And with exalted thoughts and pow'rs refin'd;
Swell the wide circuit of th' expanding mind;
O, if still conscious of our bliss or woe,
You look with kind regard on ought below,
Be thou my genius! Thy propitious aid
Spread, guardian angel, round my favour'd head.
May the great purpose, may the glow divine,
That warm'd thy bosom, now inspirit mine!
To imitate my God, to bless mankind
The sweet and sov'reign passion of my mind!
Be such thy praise! Be such my glorious aim!
Till my soul, kindled at so fair a flame,
And wing'd for bliss and heav'n, like thine shall rise
To join her kindred-angels in the skies.

THE

RISE AND PROGRESS

OF

RELIGION IN THE SOUL.

ILLUSTRATED IN A

COURSE OF SERIOUS AND PRACTICAL

ADDRESSES,

SUITED TO PERSONS OF EVERY CHARACTER AND CIRCUMSTANCE

WITH A

DEVOUT MEDITATION OR PRAYER

ADDED TO EACH CHAPTER.

Testifying—Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Acts xx. 21.

Whom we preach; warning every Man, and teaching every Man in all Wisdom; that we may present every Man perfect in Christ Jesus. Col. i. 28.

TO THE

REV. DR. ISAAC WATTS.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

WITH the most affectionate gratitude and respect, I beg leave to present to you a book, which owes its existence to your request, its copiousness to your plan, and much of its perspicuity to your review, and to the use I made of your remarks on that part of it, which your health and leisure would permit you to examine. I address it to you, not to beg your patronage to it, for of that I am already well assured; and much less from any ambition of attempting your character, for which, if I were more equal to the subject, I should think this a very improper place: but chiefly from a secret delight, which I find in the thought of being known to those whom this may reach, as one whom you have honoured, not only with your friendship, but with so much of your esteem and approbation too, as must substantially appear, in your committing a work to me, which you had yourself projected as one of the most considerable services of your life.

I have long thought the love of popular applause a meanness, which a philosophy far inferior to that of our divine master might have taught us to conquer. But to be esteemed by eminently great and good men, to whom we are intimately known, appears to me, not only one of the most solid attestations of some real worth, but next to the approbation of God and our own consciences, one of its most valuable rewards. It will, I doubt not, be found so in that world, to which spirits like yours are tending, and for which, through divine grace, you have obtained so uncommon a degree of ripeness. And permit me, Sir, while I write this, to refresh myself with the hope, that when that union of hearts, which has so long subsisted between us, shall arrive to its full maturity and endearment there, it will be matter of mutual delight, to recollect, that you have assigned me, and that I have, in some degree, executed a task, which may perhaps, under the blessing of God, awaken and improve religious sentiments in the minds of those whom we leave behind us, and of others, who may arise after us in this vain, transitory and insnaring world.

Such is the improvement you have made of your capacities for service, that I am fully persuaded, heaven has received very few, in these latter ages, who have done so much to serve its interests here below; few, who have laboured in this best of causes with equal assiduity, and equal success. And therefore I cannot but join with all who wish well to the christian interest among us, in acknowledging the goodness of providence to you and to the church of Christ, in prolonging a life at once so valuable and so tender, to

such an advanced period. With them, Sir, I rejoice, that God hath given you to possess in so extraordinary a degree, not only the consciousness of intending great benefit to the world, but the satisfaction of having effected it, and of seeing such an harvest already springing up, I hope as an earnest of a much more copious increase from thence. With multitudes more I bless God, that you are not in this evening of so afflicted and yet so laborious a day, rendered entirely incapable of serving the public from the press, and from the pulpit: and that amidst the pain which your active spirit feels, when these pleasing services suffer long interruptions from bodily weakness, it may be so singularly refreshed by reflecting on that sphere of extensive usefulness, in which, by your writings, you continually move.

I congratulate you, dear Sir, that while you are in a multitude of families and schools of the lower class, condescending to the humble, yet important work of forming infant minds to the first rudiments of religious knowledge, and devout impressions, by your various catechisms and divine songs; you are also daily reading lectures of logic, and other useful branches of philosophy, to studious youths; and this not only in private academies, but in the most public and celebrated seats of learning; nor merely in Scotland, and in our American colonies, (where, from some peculiar considerations, it might most naturally be expected;) but through the amiable candor of some excellent men and accomplished tutors, in our English universities too. I congratulate you, that you are teaching, no doubt, hundreds of ministers, and thousands of private christians, by your sermons, and other theological writings: so happily calculated to diffuse through their minds that light of knowledge, and through their hearts that fervour of piety, which God has been pleased to inkindle in your own. But above all, I congratulate you, that by your sacred poetry, especially by your psalms, and your hymns, you are leading the worship, and I trust also animating the devotion of myriads, in our public assemblies every sabbath, and in their families or closets every day. This, Sir, at least so far as it relates to the service of the sanctuary, is an unparalleled favour by which God hath been pleased to distinguish you, I may boldly say it, beyond any of his servants now upon earth. Well may it be esteemed a glorious equivalent, and indeed much more than an equivalent, for all those views of ecclesiastical preferment, to which such talents, learning, virtues, and interest might have intitled you in an establishment; and I doubt not, but you joyfully accept it as such.

Nor is it easy to conceive, in what circumstances you could, on any supposition, have been easier and happier, than in that pious and truly honourable family, in which as I verily believe, in special indulgence both to you and to it, providence has been pleased to appoint that you shall spend so considerable a part of your life. It is my earnest prayer, that all the remainder of it may be serene, useful, and pleasant. And as, to my certain knowledge, your compositions have been the singular comfort of many excellent christians (some of them numbered among my dearest friends,) on their dying bed; for I have heard stanzas of them repeated from the lips of several, who were doubtless in a few hours to begin the song of Moses and the Lamb: so I hope and trust, that when God shall call you to that salvation, for which your faith and patience have so long been waiting, he will shed around you the choicest beams of his favour, and gladden your heart with consolations, like those which you have been the happy instrument of administering to others.

In the mean time, Sir, be assured that I am not a little animated in the various labours to which providence has called me, by reflecting, that I have

such a contemporary, and especially such a friend; whose single presence would be to me as that of "a cloud of witnesses" here below, to awaken my alacrity "in the race that is set before me." And I am persuaded, that while I say this, I speak the sentiment of many of my brethren, even of various denominations: a consideration, which I hope will do something towards reconciling a heart so generous as yours, to the delay of that "exceeding and eternal weight of glory," which is now so nearly approaching. Yes, my honoured friend, you will, I hope, cheerfully endure a little longer continuance in life amidst all its infirmities; from an assurance, that while God is pleased to maintain the exercise of your reason, it is hardly possible that you should "live in vain," to the world or yourself. Every day, and every trial, is brightening your crown, and rendering you still more "meet for an inheritance amongst the saints in light." Every word that you drop from the pulpit, has now, surely, its peculiar weight: the eyes of many are on their ascending prophet, eagerly intent that they may catch, if not his mantle, at least some divine sentence from his lips, which may long guide their ways, and warm their hearts. This solicitude your friends bring into those happy moments, in which they are favoured with your converse in private: and when you are retired from them, your prayers, I doubt not, largely contribute towards guarding your country, watering the church, and blessing the world. Long may they continue to answer these great ends! And permit me Sir, to conclude with expressing my cheerful confidence, that in those best moments you are often particularly mindful of one, who so highly esteems, so greatly needs, and so warmly returns that remembrance, as,

Reverend and dear Sir,

Your most affectionate Brother,

And obliged humble servant,

P. DODDRIDGE.

Northampton, Dec. 13, 1744.

PREFACE.

THE several hints given in the dedication and the first chapter of this treatise, which contains a particular plan of the design, render it unnecessary to introduce it with a long preface. Some of my readers may perhaps remember, that several years ago I promised this work to the public, in the preface to the second edition of my 'Sermons on the power and grace of Christ,' &c. My much honoured friend Dr. Watts had laid the scheme, especially of the former part: but as those indispositions, with which (to the unspeakable grief of the churches,) God has been pleased to exercise him, and forbid his hopes of being able to add this, to his many labours of love to immortal souls, he was pleased in a very affectionate and importunate manner to urge me to undertake it. And I bless God with my whole heart, not only that he hath carried me through this delightful task, for such indeed have I found it,) but also that he hath spared that worthy and amiable person to see it accomplished, and given him strength and spirit to review so considerable a part of it. His approbation, expressed in stronger terms than modesty will permit me to repeat, encourages me to hope, that it is executed in such a manner, as may, by the divine blessing, render it of some general service. And I the rather expect it will be so, as it now comes abroad into the world, not only with my own prayers and his, but also with those of many pious friends, which I have been particularly careful to engage for its success.

Into whatever hands this work may come, I must desire, that before any pass their judgment upon it, they would please to read it through; that they may discern the connection between one part of it and another. Which I the rather request, because I have long observed, that christians of different parties have been eagerly laying hold on particular parts of the system of divine truths, and have been contending about them as if each had been all; or as if the separation of the members from each other, and from the head, were the preservation of the body, instead of its destruction. They have been zealous to espouse the defence and to maintain the honour and usefulness of each apart; whereas their honour, as well as usefulness, seems to me to lie much in their connection. And suspicions have often arisen betwixt the respective defenders of each, which have appeared as unreasonable and absurd, as if all the preparations for securing one part of a ship in a storm were to be censured as a contrivance to sink the rest. I pray God, to give to all his ministers and people, more and more of *the spirit of wisdom, and of love, and of a sound mind*; and to remove far from us those mutual jealousies and animosities, which hinder our acting with that unanimity which is necessary in order to the successful carrying on of our common warfare against the enemies of christianity. We may be sure, these enemies will never fail to make their own advantage of our multiplied divi-

sions, and severe contests with each other: but they must necessarily lose both their ground and their influence, in proportion to the degree, in which the energy of christian principles is felt, to unite and transform the hearts of those by whom they are professed.

I take this opportunity of adding, that as this treatise may be looked upon as the sequel of my "Sermons on Regeneration," though in something of a different method; a second edition of those sermons is now published (in compliance with the request of many of my friends,) in the same form and size with this book. I have been solicitous to make them both as cheap as possible, that I may fall in with the charitable designs of those who may propose to give them away. There is however an edition of this treatise in octavo, for such as chuse rather to have it in a larger character and fairer form.

I have studied the greatest plainness of speech, that the lowest of my readers may, if possible, be able to understand every word; and I hope, persons of a more elegant taste and refined education will pardon what appeared to me so necessary a piece of charity. Such a care in practical writings seems one important instance of that *honouring all men*, which our amiable and condescending religion teaches us: and I have been particularly obliged to my worthy patron, for what he has done to shorten some of the sentences, and to put my meaning into plainer and more familiar words. Yet I dare say, the world will not suspect it of having contracted any impropriety or inelegance of language, by passing through the hands of Dr. Watts.

I must add one remark here, which I heartily wish I had not omitted in the first edition, viz. That though I do in this book consider my reader as successively in a great variety of supposed circumstances, beginning with those of a thoughtless sinner, and leading him through several stages of conviction, terror, &c. as what may be previous to his sincerely accepting the gospel, and devoting himself to the service of God; yet I would by no means be thought to insinuate, that every one, who is brought to that happy resolution, arrives at it through those particular steps, or feels agitations of mind equal in degree to those I have described. Some sense of sin, and some serious and humbling apprehension of our danger and misery in consequence of it, must indeed be necessary, to dispose us to receive the grace of the gospel, and the Saviour who is there exhibited to our faith. But God is pleased sometimes to begin the work of his grace on the heart, almost from the first dawning of reason, and to carry it on by such gentle and insensible degrees, that very excellent persons who have made the most eminent attainments in the divine life, have been unable to recount any remarkable history of their conversion: and so far as I can learn, this is most frequently the case with those of them, who have enjoyed the benefits of a pious education, when it has not been succeeded by a vicious and licentious youth. God forbid therefore, that any such should be so insensible of their own happiness, as to fall into perplexity with relation to their spiritual state, for want of being able to trace such a rise of religion in their minds, as it was necessary on my plan for me to describe, and exemplify here.—I have spoken my sentiments on this head so fully in the VIIIth of my "Sermons on Regeneration," that I think no one who has read and remembers the general contents of it, can be in danger of mistaking my meaning here. But as it is very possible that this book may fall into the hands of many, who have not read the other, and have no opportunity of consulting it, I thought it proper to insert this caution in the preface to this; and I am much obliged

to that worthy and excellent person, who kindly reminded me of the expediency of doing it.

I conclude with desiring my friends to forgive the necessary interruption which this work has given to the third volume of my "Family Expositor," which I am now sending to the press as fast as I can, and hope to publish it in less than a year. To this volume I have referred several additional notes, and the indexes, which are necessary to render the former volumes complete; having determined to add nothing to the second edition, which should depreciate the former. I do not think it necessary to trouble my friends with a new subscription; taking it for granted, that few who were pleased with the other part of the work, will fail of perfecting the set on the historical books of the New Testament. When my exposition on the epistolary part may be completed, God only knows. I will proceed in it as fast as the other duties of my station will permit; and I earnestly beg, that if my readers find edification and advantage by any of my writings, that they would in return offer a prayer for me, that God may carry me on, in that most important labour of my pen, under the remarkable tokens of his guidance and blessing.

THE

RISE AND PROGRESS

OF

RELIGION IN THE SOUL.

CHAP. I.

The Introduction to the Work, with some general Account of its Design.

That true Religion is very rare, appears from comparing the Nature of it with the lives and characters of men around us, §. 1, 2. The Want of it matter of just Lamentation, §. 3. To remedy this Evil, is the Design of the ensuing Treatise: §. 4. To which, therefore, the author earnestly bespeaks the Attention of the Reader, as his own heart is deeply interested in it, §. 5, 6. A general Plan of the Work; of which the first fifteen chapters relate chiefly to the Rise of Religion, and the remaining chapters to its Progress, §. 7—12. The chapter concludes with a Prayer for the Success of the Work.

§. 1. WHEN we look round about us with an attentive eye, and consider the characters and pursuits of men, we plainly see, that though in the original constitution of their natures, they only, of all the creatures that dwell on the face of the earth, be capable of religion, yet many of them shamefully neglect it. And whatever different notions people may entertain of what they call religion, all must agree in owning, that it is very far from being an universal thing.

§. 2. Religion, in its most general view, is such a sense of God on the soul, and such a conviction of our obligation to him, and of our dependence upon him, as shall engage us to make it our great care, to conduct ourselves in a manner, which we have reason to believe will be pleasing to him. Now when we have given this plain account of religion, it is by no means necessary that we should search among the savages of the African or American nations, to find instances of those who are strangers to it. When we view the conduct of the generality of people at home, in a christian and protestant nation, in a nation whose obligations to God have been singular, almost beyond those of any other people under heaven, will any one presume to say, that religion has an universal reign among us? Will any

one suppose, that it prevails in every life? that it reigns in every heart? Alas, the avowed infidelity, the profanation of the name and day of God, the drunkenness, the lewdness, the injustice, the falsehood, the pride, the prodigality, the base selfishness, and stupid insensibility of the spiritual and eternal interests of themselves, and others, which so generally appear among us, loudly proclaim the contrary. So that one would imagine upon this view, that thousands and ten thousands thought the neglect, and even the contempt of religion, were a glory, rather than a reproach. And where is the neighbourhood, where is the society, where is the happy family, consisting of any considerable number, in which, on a more exact examination, we find reason to say, "religion fills even this little circle?" There is, perhaps, a freedom from any gross and scandalous immoralities, an external decency of behaviour, an attendance on the outward forms of worship in public, and (here and there) in the family; yet amidst all this, there is nothing which looks like the genuine actions of the spiritual and divine life. There is no appearance of love to God, no reverence for his presence, no desire of his favours as the highest good: there is no cordial belief of the gospel of salvation; no eager solicitude to escape that condemnation which we have incurred by sin; no hearty concern to secure that eternal life, which Christ has purchased and secured for his people, and which he freely promises to all who will receive him. Alas! whatever the love of a friend, or even of a parent can do; whatever inclination there may be, to hope all things, and believe all things the most favourable; evidence to the contrary will force itself upon the mind, and extort the unwilling conclusion; that whatever else may be amiable in this dear friend, in that favourite child, "religion dwells not in its breast."

§. 3. To a heart that firmly believes the gospel, and views persons and things in the light of eternity, this is one of the most mournful considerations in the world. And indeed to such a one all the other calamities and evils of human nature appear trifles, when compared with this; the absence of real religion, and that contrariety to it which reigns in so many thousands of mankind. Let this be cured, and all the other evils will easily be borne; nay, good will be extracted out of them. But if this continue, it *bringeth forth fruit unto death**; and in consequence of it, multitudes, who share the entertainments of an indulgent providence with us, and are at least allied to us

* Rom. vii. 5.

by the bond of the same common nature, must in a few years be swept away into utter destruction, and be plunged beyond redemption into everlasting burnings.

§. 4. I doubt not, but there are many, under those various forms of religious profession, which have so unhappily divided us in this nation, who are not only lamenting this in public, if their office in life calls them to an opportunity of doing it; but are likewise mourning before God in secret, under a sense of this sad state of things; and who can appeal to him that searches all hearts, as to the sincerity of their desires to revive the languishing cause of vital christianity and substantial piety. And, among the rest, the author of this treatise may with confidence say, it is this which animates him to the present attempt, in the midst of so many other cares and labours. For this, he is willing to lay aside many of those curious amusements in science which might suit his own private taste, and perhaps open a way for some reputation in the learned world. For this he is willing to wave the laboured ornaments of speech, that he may, if possible, descend to the capacity of the lowest part of mankind. For this he would endeavour to convince the judgment, and to reach the heart of every reader. And, in a word, for this, without any dread of the name of an enthusiast, whoever may at random throw it out upon the occasion, he would, as it were, enter with you into your closet, from day to day; and with all plainness and freedom, as well as seriousness, would discourse to you of the great things which he has learnt from the christian religion, and on which he assuredly knows your everlasting happiness to depend: that if you hitherto have lived without religion, you may now be awakened to the consideration of it, and may be instructed in its nature and importance; or that if you are already, through divine grace, experimentally acquainted with it, you may be assisted to make a farther progress.

§. 5. But he earnestly intreats this favour of you, that as it is plainly a serious business we are entering upon, you would be pleased to give him a serious and attentive hearing. He intreats, that these addresses, and these meditations, may be perused at leisure, and be thought over in retirement; and that you would do him and yourself the justice to believe the representations which are here made, and the warnings which are given, to proceed from sincerity and love; from an heart, which would not designedly give one moment's unnecessary pain to the meanest creature on the face of the earth, and much less

to any human mind. If he be importunate, it is because he at least imagines, that there is just reason for it; and fears, lest amidst the multitudes, who are undone by the utter neglect of religion, and among those who are greatly damaged for want of a more resolute and constant attendance to it, this may be the case of some into whose hands this treatise may fall.

§. 6. He is a barbarian, and deserves not to be called a man, who can look on the sorrows of his fellow creatures without drawing out his soul unto them and wishing, at least, that it were in the power of his hand to help them. Surely earth would be an heaven to that man, who could go about from place to place, scattering happiness wheresoever he came, though it were only the body that he were capable of relieving, and though he could impart nothing better than the happiness of a mortal life. But the happiness rises in proportion to the nature and degree of the good which he imparts. Happy, are we ready to say, were those honoured servants of Christ, who in the early days of his church, were the benevolent and sympathizing instruments of conveying miraculous healing to those whose cases seemed desperate; who poured in upon the blind and the deaf the pleasures of light and sound, and called up the dead to the powers of action and enjoyment. But this is an honour and happiness, which it is not fit for God commonly to bestow on mortal men. Yet there have been in every age, and blessed be his name, there still are those, whom he has condescended to make his instruments in conveying nobler and more lasting blessings than these to their fellow creatures. Death hath long since veiled the eyes, and stopped the ears of those, who were the subjects of miraculous healing, and recovered its empire over those who were once recalled from the grave. But the souls who are prevailed upon to receive the gospel, live for ever. God has owned the labours of his faithful ministers in every age, to produce these blessed effects; and some of them *being dead, yet speak** with power and success in this important cause. Wonder not then, if living and dying, I be ambitious of this honour; and if my mouth be freely opened, where I can truly say, *my heart is enlarged*†.

§. 7. In forming my general plan I have been solicitous, that this little treatise might, if possible, be useful to all its readers, and contain something suitable to each. I will therefore take the man and the christian, in a great variety of circumstances. I will first suppose myself addressing to one of the

* Heb. xi. 4.

† 2 Cor. vi. 11.

vast number of thoughtless creatures, who have hitherto been utterly unconcerned about religion; and will try what can be done, by all plainness and earnestness of address, to awaken him from this fatal lethargy, to a care (chap. 2), an affectionate and an immediate care, about it (chap. 3). I will labour to fix a deep and awful conviction of guilt upon his conscience (chap. 4), and to strip him of his vain excuses and his flattering hopes (chap. 5). I will read to him, Oh! that I could fix on his heart, that sentence, that dreadful sentence, which a righteous and an almighty God hath denounced against him, as a sinner (chap. 6); and endeavour to shew him, in how helpless a state he lies under this condemnation, as to any capacity he has of delivering himself (chap 7). But I do not mean to leave any in so terrible a situation: I will joyfully proclaim the glad tidings of pardon and salvation by Christ Jesus our Lord, which is all the support and confidence of my own soul (chap. 8): and then I will give general views of the way, by which this salvation is to be obtained (chap. 9): urging the sinner to accept of it, as affectionately as I can (chap. 10); though nothing can be sufficiently pathetic, where, as in this matter, the life of an immortal soul is in question.

§. 8. Too probable it is, that some will, after all this, remain insensible: and therefore, that their sad case may not incumber the following articles, I shall here take a solemn leave of them (chap. 11): and then shall turn and address myself, as compassionately as I can, to a most contrary character; I mean to a soul overwhelmed with a sense of the greatness of its sins, and trembling under the burden, as if there were no more hope for him in God (chap. 12). And that nothing may be omitted, which may give solid peace to the troubled spirit, I shall endeavour to guide its enquiries as to the evidences of sincere repentance and faith (chap. 13); which will be farther illustrated by a more particular view of the several branches of the christian temper, such as may serve at once to assist the reader in judging what he is, and to shew him what he should labour to be (chap. 14). This will naturally lead to a view of the need we have of the influences of the blessed spirit, to assist us in the important and difficult work of the true christian, and of the encouragement we have to hope for these divine assistances (chap. 15): in an humble dependence on which, I shall then enter on the consideration of several cases which often occur in the christian life, in which particular addresses to the conscience may be requisite and useful.

§. 9. As some particular difficulties and discouragements

attend the first entrance on a religious course, it will here be our first care to animate the young convert against them (chap. 16); and that it may be done more effectually, I shall urge a solemn dedication of himself to God (chap. 17); to be confirmed by entering into the full communion of the church by an approach to the sacred table (chap. 18). That these engagements may be more happily fulfilled, we shall endeavour to draw a more particular plan of that devout, regular, and accurate course, which ought daily to be attended to (chap. 19): and because the idea will probably rise so much higher than what is the general practice, even of good men, we shall endeavour to persuade the reader to make the attempt, hard as it may seem (chap. 20); and shall caution him against various temptations, which might otherwise draw him aside to negligence and sin (chap. 21).

§. 10. Happy will it be for the reader, if these exhortations and cautions be attended to with becoming regard! but as it is, alas, too probable, that notwithstanding all, the infirmities of nature will sometimes prevail, we shall consider the case of deadness and languor in religion, which often steals upon us by insensible degrees (chap. 22); from whence there is too easy a passage to that terrible one of a return into known and deliberate sin (chap. 23). And as the one or the other of these tends, in a proportionable degree, to provoke the blessed God to hide his face, and his injured spirit to withdraw, that melancholy condition will be taken into a particular survey (chap. 24). I shall then take notice also of the case of great and heavy afflictions in life (chap. 25); a discipline which the best of men have reason to expect, especially when they backslide from God, and yield to their spiritual enemies.

§. 11. Instances of this kind will, I fear, be too frequent; yet, I trust, there will be many others, whose *path, like the dawning light*, will "shine more and more until the perfect day*." And therefore we shall endeavour in the best manner we can, to assist the christian in passing a true judgment on the growth of grace in his heart (chap. 26); as we had done before in judging of its sincerity. And as nothing conduces more to the advance of grace, than the lively exercise of love to God, and a holy joy in him, we shall here remind the real christian of those mercies which tend to excite that love and joy (chap. 27); and in the views of them, to animate him to those vigorous efforts of usefulness in life, which so well become his character, and will have so happy an efficacy on brightening his crown (chap.

* Prov. iv. 18.

28). Supposing him to act accordingly, we shall then labour to illustrate and assist the delight with which he may look forward to the awful solemnities of death and judgment (chap. 29): and shall close the scene by accompanying him, as it were, to the nearest confines of that dark valley, through which he is to pass to glory; giving him such directions, as may seem most subservient to his honouring God, and adorning religion, by his dying behaviour (chap. 30.) Nor am I without a pleasing hope, that, through the divine blessing and grace, I may be in some instances so successful, as to leave those triumphing in the views of judgment and eternity, and glorifying God by a truly christian life and death, whom I found trembling in the apprehensions of future misery; or perhaps, in a much more dangerous and miserable circumstance than that; I mean, entirely forgetting the prospect, and sunk into the most stupid insensibility of those things, for an attendance to which the human mind was formed, and in comparison of which, all the pursuits of this transitory life are emptier than wind, and lighter than a feather.

§. 12. Such a variety of heads must, to be sure, be handled but briefly, as we intend to bring them within the bulk of a moderate volume. I shall not, therefore, discuss them as a preacher might properly do in sermons, in which the truths of religion are professedly to be explained and taught, defended and improved, in a wide variety, and long detail of propositions, arguments, objections, replies, and inferences, marshalled and numbered under their distinct generals. I shall here speak in a looser and freer manner, as a friend to a friend, just as I would do, if I were to be in person admitted to a private audience, by one whom I tenderly loved, and whose circumstances and character I knew to be like that, which the title of one chapter or another of this treatise describes. And when I have discoursed with him a little while, which will seldom be so long as half an hour; I shall, as it were, step aside, and leave him to meditate on what he has heard, or endeavour to assist him in such fervent addresses to God, as it may be proper to mingle with those meditations. In the mean time, I will here take the liberty to pray over my reader and my work; and to commend it solemnly to the divine blessing, in token of my deep conviction of an entire dependence upon it. And I am well persuaded, that sentiments like these are common, in the general, to every faithful minister, to every real christian.

A Prayer for the Success of this Work in promoting the Rise and Progress of Religion.

" OH thou great eternal original, and author of all created being and happiness! I adore thee who hast made man a creature capable of religion, and hast bestowed this dignity and felicity upon our nature, that it may be taught to say, *Where is God our maker?** I lament that degeneracy spread over the whole human race, which has turned our *glory into shame*,† and has rendered the forgetfulness of God (unnatural as it is) so common, and so universal a disease. Holy Father, we know it is thy presence and thy teaching alone, that can reclaim thy wandering children; can impress a sense of divine things on the heart, and render that sense lasting and effectual. From thee proceed all good purposes and desires; and this desire above all, of diffusing wisdom, piety and happiness in this world, which, (though sunk in such deep apostacy) thine infinite mercy has not utterly forsaken.

Thou knowest, O Lord, the hearts of the children of men‡ " and an upright soul, in the midst of all the censures and suspicions it may meet with, rejoices in thine intimate knowledge of its most secret sentiments and principles of action. Thou knowest the sincerity and fervency, with which thine unworthy servant desires to spread the knowledge of thy name, and the savour of thy gospel, among all to whom this work may reach. Thou knowest, that hadst thou given him an abundance of this world, it would have been, in his esteem, the noblest pleasure that abundance could have afforded, to have been thine almoner, in distributing thy bounties to the indigent and necessitous, and so causing the sorrowful heart to rejoice in thy goodness, dispensed through his hands. Thou knowest, that hadst thou given him, either by ordinary or extraordinary methods, the gifts of healing, it would have been his daily delight, to relieve the pains, the maladies, and infirmities of men's bodies; to have seen the languishing countenance, brightened by returning health and cheerfulness; and much more to have beheld the roving distracted mind, reduced to calmness and serenity, in the exercise of its rational faculties. Yet happier, far happier will he think himself, in those humble circumstances, in which thy providence hath placed him, if thou vouchsafe to honour these his feeble endeavours, as the means of relieving and enriching men's minds; of recovering them from the madness of a sinful state,

* Job xxxv. 10. † Hos. iv. 7. ‡ 2 Chron. vi. 30.

and bringing back thy reasonable creatures to the knowledge, the service, and the enjoyment of their God; or of improving those, who are already reduced.

O may it have that blessed influence on the person whosoever he be, that is now reading these lines, and on all who may read or hear them! Let not my Lord be angry, if I presume to ask, that however weak and contemptible this work may seem in the eyes of the children of this world, and however imperfect it really be, as well as the author of it unworthy, it may nevertheless live before thee; and through a divine power, be mighty to produce the rise and progress of religion in the minds of multitudes in distant places, and in generations yet to come! Impute it not, O God, as a culpable ambition, if I desire, that whatever becomes of my name, about which I would not lose one thought before thee, this work, to which I am now applying myself in thy strength, may be completed and propagated far abroad; that it may reach to those that are yet unborn, and teach them thy name and thy praise, when the author has long dwelt in the dust: that so when he shall appear before thee in the great day of final account, his joy may be increased, and his crown brightened, by numbers before unknown to each other, and to him! But if this petition be too great to be granted to one, who pretends no claim, but thy sovereign grace, to hope for being favoured with the least, give him to be in thine almighty hand the blessed instrument of converting and saving one soul: and if it be but one, and that the weakest and meanest of those who are capable of receiving this address, it shall be most thankfully accepted as a rich recompence for all the thought and labour it may cost; and though it should be amidst a thousand disappointments with respect to others, yet it shall be the subject of immortal songs of praise to thee, O blessed God, for and by every soul, whom, through the blood of Jesus, and the grace of thy spirit, thou hast saved, and everlasting honours shall be ascribed to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, by the innumerable company of angels, and by the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven. Amen."

CHAP. II.

The Careless Sinner Awakened.

It is too supposable a case, that this Treatise may come into such Hands: §. 1, 2. Since many, not grossly vicious, fall under that Character. §. 3, 4. A more particular Illustration of this Case, with an Appeal to the Reader whether it be not his own. §. 5, 6. Expostulation with such; §. 7—9. More particularly, (1.) From acknowledged Principles, relating to the Nature of God, his universal Presence, Agency, and Perfections. §. 10—12. (2.) From a View of Personal Obligations to him. §. 13. (3.) From the Danger of this Neglect, when considered in its Aspect on a future State. §. 14. An Appeal to the Conscience, as already convinced. §. 15. Transition to the Subject of the next Chapter. §. 16. The Meditation of a Sinner, who having been long thoughtless begins to be awakened.

§. 1. SHAMEFULLY and fatally as religion is neglected in the world, yet blessed be God it has some sincere disciples; children of wisdom, by whom, even in this foolish and degenerate age, it *is justified*;* who having, by divine grace, been brought to the knowledge of God in Christ, have faithfully devoted their hearts to him, and by a natural consequence are devoting their lives to his service. Could I be sure this treatise would fall into no hands but theirs, my work would be shorter, easier, and pleasanter.

§. 2. But among the thousands that neglect religion, it is more than possible, that some of my readers may be included: and I am so deeply affected with their unhappy case, that the temper of my heart, as well as the proper method of my subject, leads me in the first place to address myself to such; to apply to every one of them: and therefore to you, O reader, whoever you are, who may come under the denomination of a careless sinner.

§. 3. Be not, I beseech you, angry at the name. The physicians of souls must speak plainly, or they may murder those whom they should cure. I would make no harsh and unreasonable supposition. I would charge you with nothing more, than is absolutely necessary to convince you, that you are the person to whom I speak. I will not, therefore, imagine you to be a profane and abandoned profligate. I will not suppose, that you allow yourself to blaspheme God, to dishonour his name by customary swearing, or grossly to violate his sabbath, or commonly to neglect the solemnities of his public worship: I will not imagine that you have injured your neighbours, in

* Matt. xi. 19.

their lives, their chastity, or their possessions, either by violence, or by fraud; or that you have scandalously debased the rational nature of man, by that vile intemperance, which transforms us into the worst kind of brutes, or something beneath them.

§. 4. In opposition to all this, I will suppose, that you believe the existence and providence of God, and the truth of christianity, as a revelation from him: of which, if you have any doubt, I must desire, that you would immediately seek your satisfaction elsewhere.* I say, immediately; because not to believe it, is in effect to disbelieve it; and will make your ruin equally certain, though perhaps it may leave it less aggravated, than if contempt and opposition had been added to suspicion and neglect. But supposing you to be a nominal christian, and not a deist, or a sceptic; I will also suppose your conduct among men to be not only blameless, but amiable; and that they who know you most intimately, must acknowledge, that you are just and sober, humane and courteous, compassionate and liberal: yet with all this, you may *lack that one thing*† on which your eternal happiness depends.

§. 5. I beseech you, reader, whoever you are, that you would now look seriously into your own heart, and ask it this one plain question: Am I truly religious? Is the love of God the governing principle of my life? Do I walk under a sense of his presence? Do I converse with him from day to day, in the exercise of prayer and praise? And am I, on the whole, making his service my business and my delight, regarding him as my master and my father?

§. 6. It is my present business only to address myself to the person, whose conscience answers in the negative. And I would address with equal plainness, and equal freedom, to high and low, to rich and poor: to you, who (as the scripture with a dreadful propriety expresses it) *live without God in the world*?‡ and while in words and forms, you *own God, deny him in your actions*,‖ and behave yourselves in the main, (a few external ceremonies only excepted,) just as you would do, if you believed, and were sure, there was no God. Unhappy creature, whoever you are! your own heart condemns you immediately

* In such a case, I beg leave to refer the reader to my "Three Sermons on the Evidence of Christianity;" the last of the ten on "The Power and Grace of Christ;" in which he may see the hitherto unshaken foundation of my own faith, in a short, and I hope, a clear view.

† Mark x. 21. ‡ Eph. ii. 12. ‖ Tit. i. 16.

and how much more that *God who is greater than your heart, and knoweth all things.** He is in *secret*† as well as in public; and words cannot express the delight, with which his children converse with him alone: but in secret you acknowledge him not; you neither pray to him nor praise him, in your retirements. Accompts, correspondencies, studies may often bring you into your closet; but if nothing but devotion were to be transacted there, it would be to you an unfrequented place. And thus you go on from day to day, in a continual forgetfulness of God; and are as thoughtless about religion, as if you had long since demonstrated it to yourself, that it was a mere dream. If, indeed, you are sick, you will perhaps cry to God for health; in any extreme danger, you will lift up your eyes and your voice for deliverance: but as for the pardon of sin and the other blessings of the gospel, you are not at all inwardly solicitous about them; though you profess to believe that the gospel is divine, and the blessings of it eternal. All your thoughts, and all your hours, are divided between the business and the amusements of life: and if now and then, an awful providence, or a serious sermon or book, awakens you, it is but a few days, or it may be a few hours, and you are the same careless creature you ever were before. On the whole, you act, as if you were resolved to put it to the venture, and at your own expence to make the experiment, whether the consequences of neglecting religion be indeed as terrible, as its ministers and friends have represented. Their remonstrances do indeed sometimes force themselves upon you, as (considering the age and country in which you live,) it is hardly possible entirely to avoid them; but you have, it may be, found out the art of Isaiah's people, *hearing to hear, and not understand,; and seeing to see, and not perceive: your heart is waxed gross, your eyes are closed, and your ears heavy.*‡ Under the very ordinances of worship, your thoughts *are at the ends of the earth.*‖ Every amusement of the imagination is welcome, if it may but lead away your mind from so insipid, and so disagreeable a subject as religion. And probably the very last time you were in a worshipping assembly. you managed, just as you would have done, if you had thought God knew nothing of your behaviour; or as if you did not think it worth one single care, whether he were pleased or displeased with it.

§. 7. Alas! is it then come to this, with all your belief of God, and providence, and scripture, that religion is not worth

* 1 John iii 20. † Matth. vi. 6. ‡ Isai. vi. 9, 10. ‖ Prov. xvii. 24.

a thought! That it is not worth one hour's serious consideration and reflection, "What God and Christ are; and what you yourselves are, and what you must hereafter be?" Where then are all your rational faculties? How are they employed, or rather how are they stupified and benumbed?

§. 8. The certainty and importance of the things of which I speak, are so evident, from the principles which you yourselves grant, that one might almost set a child or an idiot to reason upon them. And yet they are neglected by those, who are grown up to understanding, and perhaps some of them to such refinement of understanding, that they would think themselves greatly injured, if they were not to be reckoned among the politer, and the more learned part of mankind.

§. 9. But it is not your neglect, sirs, that can destroy the being or importance of such things as these. It may indeed destroy you, but it cannot in the least affect them. Permit me therefore, having been myself awakened, to come to each of you, and say, as the mariners did to Jonah while asleep in the midst of a much less dangerous storm, *What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise and call upon thy God**. Do you doubt as to the reasonableness, or necessity of doing it? *I will demand, and answer me*† ; answer me to your own conscience, as one that must, ere long, render another kind of account.

§. 10. You own, that there is a God: and well you may: for you cannot open your eyes, but you must see the evident proofs of his being, his presence, and his agency. You behold him around you in every object. You feel him within you, if I may so speak, in every vein, and in every nerve. You see, and you feel, not only that he hath formed you with an exquisite wisdom, which no mortal man could ever fully explain or comprehend, but that he is continually near you, wherever you are, and wherever you are employed, by day or by night; *in him you live and move, and have your being*‡. Common sense will tell you that it is not your own wisdom, and power, and attention, that causes your heart to beat, and your blood to circulate; that draws in, and sends out that breath of life, that precarious breath of a most uncertain life, *that is in your nostrils*‖. These things are done when you sleep, as well as in those waking moments, when you think not of the circulation of blood, or of the necessity of breathing, nor so much as recollect that you have a heart and lungs. Now

* Jonah i. 6. † Job xxxviii. 3. ‡ Acts xvii. 28. ‖ Isai. ii. 22.

what is this, but the hand of God, perpetually supporting and actuating those curious machines that he has made?

§. 11. Nor is his care limited to you; but if you look all around you, far as your views can reach, you see it extending itself on every side: and oh how much farther than you can trace it! Reflect on the light and heat, which the sun every where dispenses! on the air, which surrounds all our globe, on the right temperature of which the life of the whole human race depends, and that of all the inferior creatures which dwell on the earth. Think of the suitable and plentiful provision made for man and beast; the grass, the grain, the variety of fruits, and herbs, and flowers; every thing that nourishes us, every thing that delights us; and say whether it do not speak plainly and loudly, that our Almighty Maker is near, and that he is careful of us, and kind to us. And while all these things proclaim his goodness, do they not also proclaim his power! For what power has any thing comparable to that, which furnishes out these gifts of royal bounty; and which unwearied and unchanged, produces continually from day to day, and from age to age, such astonishing and magnificent effects over the face of the whole earth, and through all the regions of heaven?

§. 12. It is then evident, that God is present, present with you at this moment; even God your creator and preserver, God the creator and preserver of the whole visible and invisible world. And is he not present as a most observant and attentive being? *He that formed the eye, shall not he see? He that planted the ear, shall not he hear? He that teaches man knowledge*, that gives him his rational faculties, and pours in upon his opening mind all the light it receives by them, *shall not he know** ? He who sees all the necessities of his creatures so seasonably to provide for them, shall he not see their actions too; and seeing shall he not judge of them? Has he given us a sense and discernment of what is good and evil, of what is true and false, of what is fair and deformed in temper and conduct; and has he himself no discernment of these things? Trifle not with your conscience, which tells you at once that he judges of it, and approves or condemns, as it is decent or indecent, reasonable or unreasonable; and that the judgment which he passes, is of infinite importance to all his creatures.

§. 13. And now, to apply all this to your own case, let me seriously ask you, is it a decent and reasonable thing, that this great and glorious benefactor should be neglected by his ra-

* Psalm xciv. 9, 10.

tional creatures? by those, that are capable of attaining some knowledge of him, and presenting to him some homage? Is it decent and reasonable that he should be forgotten and neglected by you? Are you alone of all the works of his hands, forgotten or neglected by him? Oh sinner, thoughtless as you are, you cannot dare to say that, or even to think it. You need not go back to the helpless days of your infancy and childhood, to convince you of the contrary. You need not, in order to this, recollect the remarkable deliverances, which, perhaps, were wrought out for you many years ago. The repose of the last night, the refreshment and comfort you have received this day; yea, the mercies you are receiving this very moment, bear witness to him; and yet you regard him not. Ungrateful creature that you are! Could you have treated any human benefactor thus? Could you have borne to neglect a kind parent, or any generous friend, that had but a few months acted the part of a parent to you? to have taken no notice of him, while in his presence; to have returned him no thanks; to have had no contrivances to make some little acknowledgment for all his goodness? Human nature, bad as it is, is not fallen so low. Nay, the brutal nature is not so low as this. Surely every domestic animal around you must shame such ingratitude. If you do but for a few days take a little kind notice of a dog, and feed him with the refuse of your table, he will wait upon you and love to be near you; he will be eager to follow you from place to place, and when, after a little absence, you return home, will try by a thousand fond transported motions, to tell you how much he rejoices to see you again. Nay, brutes, far less sagacious and apprehensive, have some sense of our kindness, and express it after their way: as the blessed God condescends to observe, in this very view in which I mention it, *The dull ox knows its owner, and the stupid ass his master's crib**: what lamentable degeneracy therefore is it, that you do not know, that you, who have been numbered among God's professing people, do not, and will not consider your numberless obligations to him?

§. 14. Surely, if you have any ingenuity of temper, you must be ashamed and grieved in the review: but if you have not, give me leave farther to expostulate with you on this head, by setting it in something of a different light. Can you think yourselves safe, while you are acting a part like this? Do you not in your conscience believe there is an invisible and eternal

* Isai. i, 3.

world! As professed christians, we all believe it, for it is no controverted point, but displayed in scripture with so clear an evidence, that, subtile and ingenious as men are in error, they have not yet found out a way to evade it. And believing this, do you not see, that while you are thus wandering from God, *destruction and misery are in your ways**? Will this indolence and negligence of temper be any security to you? Will it guard you from death? Will it excuse you from judgment? You might much more reasonably expect, that shutting your eyes would be a defence against the rage of a devouring lion; or that looking another way should secure your body from being pierced by a bullet or a sword. When God speaks of the extravagant folly of some thoughtless creatures, who would hearken to no admonition now, he adds, in a very awful manner: *in the latter day they shall consider it perfectly*†. And is not this applicable to you? Must you not, sooner or later, be brought to think of these things, whether you will or no? And, in the mean time, do you not certainly know, that timely and serious reflection upon them is, through divine grace, the only way to prevent your ruin?

§. 15. Yes, sinner, I need not multiply words on a subject like this. Your conscience is already inwardly convinced, though your pride may be unwilling to own it. And, to prove it, let me ask you one question more: would you upon any terms and considerations whatever, come to a resolution absolutely to dismiss all farther thought of religion, and all care about it, from this day and hour, and to abide by the consequences of that neglect? I believe, hardly any man living, would be bold enough to determine upon this. I believe, most of my readers would be ready to tremble at the thought of it.

§. 16. But if it be necessary to take these things into consideration at all, it is necessary to do it quickly; for life itself is not so very long, nor so certain, that a wise man should risk much upon its continuance.

And I hope to convince you, when I have another hearing, that it is necessary to do it immediately; and that next to the madness of resolving you will not think of religion at all, is that of saying you will think of it hereafter. In the mean time, pause on the hints which have been already given, and they will prepare you to receive what it is to be added on that head.

* Rom. iii. 16. † Jer. xxiii. 20.

The Meditation of a Sinner, who was once thoughtless, but begins to be awakened.

"AWAKE, Oh my forgetful soul, awake from these wandering dreams. Turn thee from this chace of vanity, and for a little while be persuaded by all these considerations, to look forward, and to look upward, at least for a few moments. Sufficient are the hours, and days, given to the labours and amusements of life. Grudge not a short allotment of minutes, to view thyself and thine own more immediate concerns; to reflect who, and what thou art; how it comes to pass that thou art here, and what thou must quickly be!

"It is indeed, as thou hast seen it now represented, Oh my soul! Thou art the creature of God; formed and furnished by him, and lodged in a body, which he provided, and which he supports; a body, in which he intended thee only a transitory abode. Oh, think how soon *this tabernacle must be dissolved**, and thou must *return to God*†. And shall he, the one, infinite, eternal, ever-blessed, and ever-glorious being, shall he be the least of all regarded by thee? Wilt thou live and die with this character, saying, by every action of every day, unto God; *depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways*‡? The morning, the day, the evening, the night, every period of time has its excuses for this neglect. But Oh, my soul, what will these excuses appear, when examined by his penetrating eye! They may delude me: but they cannot impose on him.

"Oh thou injured, neglected, provoked benefactor! When I think, but for a moment or two, of all thy greatness, and of all thy goodness, I am astonished at this insensibility, which hath prevailed in my heart, and even still prevails. I *blush and am confounded to lift up my face before thee*‖. On the most transient review, I see, *that I have played the fool, that I have erred exceedingly* ¶. And yet this stupid heart of mine would make its having neglected thee so long, a reason for going on to neglect thee. I own it might justly be expected, that, with regard to thee, every one of thy rational creatures should be all duty and love: that each heart should be full of a sense of thy presence; and that a care to please thee should swallow up every other care. Yet thou *hast not been in all my thoughts***; and religion, the end and glory of my nature, has

* 2 Cor. v. 1. † Eccl. xii. 7. ‡ Job. xxi. 14.
‖ Ezra ix. 6. ¶ 1 Sam. xxvi. 21. ** Psal. x. 4.

been so strangely overlooked, that I have hardly ever seriously asked my own heart, what it is.—I know, if matters rest here, I perish, and yet, I feel, in my perverse nature, a secret indisposition to pursue these thoughts: a proneness, if not entirely to dismiss them, yet to lay them aside for the present. My mind is perplexed and divided; but I am sure, thou who madest me, knowest what is best for me. I therefore beseech thee, that thou wilt, *for thy name's sake, lead me and guide me**. Let me not delay, till it is for ever too late. *Pluck me as a brand out of the burning*†. Oh break this fatal enchantment that holds down my affection to objects, which my judgment comparatively despises! And let me, at length come into so happy a state of mind, that I may not be afraid to think of thee, and of myself; and may not be tempted to wish, that thou hadst not made me, or that thou couldst for ever forget me; that it may not be my best hope, to perish like the brutes.

"If what I shall farther read here, be agreeable to truth and reason; if it be calculated to promote my happiness, and is to be regarded as an intimation of thy will and pleasure to me; Oh God, let me hear and obey! Let the words of thy servant, when pleading thy cause, be like goads to pierce into my mind! and let me rather feel and smart, than die! Let them be *as nails fastened in a sure place*‡; that whatever mysteries are as yet unknown, or whatever difficulties there be in religion, if it be necessary, I may not finally neglect it; and that if it be expedient to attend immediately to it, I may no longer delay that attendance! And, Oh let thy grace teach me the lesson, I am so slow to learn; and conquer that strong opposition, which I feel in my heart, against the very thought of it! Hear these broken cries, for the sake of thy Son, who has taught and saved many a creature, as untractable as I, and can *out of stones raise up children to Abraham*‖! Amen.

* Psal. xxxi. 3.
† Amos iv. 11.
‡ Eccl. xii. 11.
‖ Matt. iii. 9.

CHAP. III.

The awakened Sinner urged to immediate Consideration, and cautioned against Delay.

Sinners, when awakened, inclinable to dismiss Convictions for the present. §. 1. An immediate Regard to Religion urged. §. 2. (1.) From the Excellency and Pleasure of the thing itself. §. 3. (2.) From the uncertainty of that future Time on which Sinners presume, compared with the sad Consequences of being cut off in Sin. §. 4. (3.) From the immutability of God's present Demands. §. 5. (4.) From the Tendency which Delay has, to make a Compliance with these Demands more difficult than it is at present. §. 6. (5.) From the Danger of God's withdrawing his Spirit, compared with the dreadful Case of a Sinner given up by it: §. 7. Which is probably now the Case of many. §. 8. Since therefore, on the whole, whatever the Event be, Delays must prove Matter of Lamentation. §. 9. The Chapter concludes with an Exhortation against yielding to them: §. 10. And a Prayer against Temptations of that Kind.

§. 1. I HOPE my last address so far awakened the convictions of my reader, as to bring him to this purpose, "that some time or other he would attend to religious considerations." But give me leave to ask earnestly and punctually, "when that shall be?" *Go thy way for this time, and at a more convenient season I will send for thee*, was the language, and the ruin, of unhappy Felix*, when he trembled under the reasonings and expostulations of the apostle. The tempter presumed not to urge, that he should give up all thoughts of repentance and reformation; but only that, considering the present hurry of his affairs (as no doubt they were many,) he should defer it to a longer day. The artifice succeeded, and Felix was undone.

§. 2. Will you, reader, dismiss me thus? For your own sake, and out of tender compassion to your perishing immortal soul, I would not willingly take up with such a dismission and excuse. No, not though you should fix a time; though you shall determine on the next year, or month, or week, or day. I would turn upon you, with all the eagerness and tenderness of friendly importunity, and intreat you to bring the matter to an issue even now. For if you say, "I will think on these things to-morrow," I shall have but little hope; and shall conclude, that all that I have hitherto urged, and all that you have read, hath been offered and viewed in vain.

§. 3. When I invited you to the care and practice of religion, it may seem strange, that it should be necessary for me

* Acts xxiv. 25.

affectionately to plead the case with you, in order to your immediate regard and compliance. What I am inviting you to, is so noble and excellent in itself, so well worthy the dignity of our rational nature, so suitable to it, so manly, and so wise, that one would imagine, you should take fire, as it were, at the first hearing of it; yea, that so delightful a view should presently possess your whole soul with a kind of indignation against yourself, that you pursued it no sooner.—" May I lift up mine eyes, and my soul to God? May I devote myself to him? May I even now commence a friendship with him; a friendship, which shall last for ever, the security, the delight, the glory of this immortal nature of mine?" And shall I draw back and say, " Nevertheless let me not commence this friendship too soon: let me live at least a few weeks or a few days longer, without God in the world." Surely it would be much more reasonable to turn inward, and say, " Oh my soul, on what vile husks hast thou been feeding, while thine heavenly Father has been forsaken, and injured? Shall I desire to multiply the days of my poverty, my scandal, and my misery?" On this principle, surely an immediate return to God should in all reason be chosen; rather than to play the fool any longer, and to go on a little more to displease God, and thereby to starve and to wound your own soul; even though your continuance in life were ever so certain, and your capacity to return to God and your duty ever so entirely in your own power, now, and in every future moment, through scores of years yet to come.

§. 4. But who, or what are you, that you should lay your account for years, or for months to come? *What is your life? Is it not even as a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away* *? And what is your security, or what is your peculiar warrant, that you should thus depend upon the certainty of its continuance? and that so absolutely, as to venture, as it were, to pawn your soul upon it? Why you will perhaps say, " I am young, and in all my bloom and vigour: I see hundreds about me, who are more than double my age: and not a few of them, who seem to think it too soon to attend religion yet."—You view the living, and you talk thus. But I beseech you, think of the dead. Return in your thoughts, to those graves in which you have left some of your young companions, and your friends. You saw them awhile ago gay and active; warm with life, and hopes, and schemes. And some of them would have thought a friend strangely importunate,

* James iv. 14.

that should have interrupted them in their business, and their pleasures, with a solemn lecture on death and eternity. Yet they were then on the very borders of both. You have since seen their corpses, or at least their coffins; and probably carried about with you the badges of mourning, which you received at their funerals. Those once vigorous, and perhaps beautiful bodies of theirs, now lie mouldering in the dust; as senseless, and helpless, as the most decrepid pieces of human nature, which fourscore years ever brought down to it. And what is infinitely more to be regarded, their souls, whether prepared for this great change, or thoughtless of it, have made their appearance before God, and are at this moment, fixed either in heaven or hell. Now let me seriously ask you, would it be miraculous, or would it be strange, if such an event should befal you? How are you sure, that some fatal disease shall not this day begin to work in your veins? How are you sure, that you shall ever be capable of reading or thinking any more, if you do not attend to what you now read, and pursue the thought which is now offering itself to your mind? This sudden alteration may at least possibly happen; and if it does, it will be to you a terrible one indeed. To be thus surprised into the presence of a forgotten God, to be torn away, at once, from a world, to which your whole heart and soul has been rivetted; a world, which has engrossed all your thoughts, and cares, all your desires and pursuits; and be fixed in a state, which you never could be so far persuaded to think of, as to spend so much as one hour in serious preparation for it: how must you even shudder at the apprehension of it, and with what horror must it fill you? It seems matter of wonder, that in such circumstances, you are not almost distracted with the thoughts of the uncertainty of life, and are not even ready to die for fear of death. To trifle with God any longer, after so solemn an admonition as this, would be a circumstance of additional provocation, which, after all the rest, might be fatal: nor is there any thing you can expect in such a case, but that he should cut you off immediately, and teach other thoughtless creatures, by your ruin, what a hazardous experiment they make, when they act as you are acting.

§. 5. And will you, after all, run this desperate risk? For what imaginable purpose can you do it? Do you think, the business of religion will become less necessary or more easy, by your delay? You know that it will not. You know that whatever the blessed God demands now, he will also demand twenty or thirty years hence, if you should live to see the time. God

hath fixed the method, in which he will pardon and accept sinners, in his gospel. And will he ever alter that method? Or if he will not, can men alter it? You like not to think of repenting, and humbling yourself before God, to receive righteousness and life from his free grace in Christ; and you above all dislike the thought of returning to God in the ways of holy obedience. But will he ever dispense with any of these, and publish a new gospel, with promises of life and salvation to impenitent unbelieving sinners, if they will but call themselves christians, and submit to a few external rites? How long, do you think, you might wait for such a change in the constitution of things? You know, death will come upon you; and you cannot but know in your own conscience, that a general dissolution will come upon the world, long before God can thus deny himself, and contradict all his perfections, and all his declarations.

§. 6. Or if his demands continue the same, as they assuredly will, do you think any thing, which is now disagreeable to you in them, will be less disagreeable hereafter, than it is at present? Shall you love sin less, when it is become more habitual to you, and when conscience is yet more enfeebled and debauched? *If you are running with the footmen and fainting, shall you be able to contend with the horsemen**. Surely you cannot imagine it. You would not say, in any distemper which threatened your life, "I will stay till I grow a little worse, and then I will apply to a physician; I will let my disease get a little more rooted in my vitals, and then I will try what can be done to remove it." No, it is only where the life of the soul is concerned, that men think thus wildly: the life and health of the body appear too precious, to be thus trifled away.

§. 7. If after such desperate experiments you are ever recovered, it must be by an operation of divine grace on your soul, yet more powerful and more wonderful in proportion to the increasing inveteracy of your spiritual maladies. And can you expect, that the Holy Spirit should be more ready to assist you, in consequence of your having so shamefully trifled with him, and affronted him? He is now, in some measure, moving on your heart: if you feel any secret relentings in it upon what you read, it is a sign you are not yet utterly forsaken. But who can tell, whether these are not the last touches he will ever give to a heart so long hardened against him? Who can tell, but God may this day *swear in his wrath that you shall not enter into his rest*†. I

* Jer. xii. 5. † Heb. iii. 18.

have been telling you, that you may immediately die. You own it is possible you may. And can you think of any thing more terrible? Yes, sinner, I will tell you of one thing more dreadful than immediate death and immediate damnation. The blessed God may say, "As for that wretched creature, who has so long trifled with me, and provoked me, let him still live: let him live in the midst of prosperity and plenty: let him live under the purest, and most powerful ordinances of the gospel too; that he may abuse them, to aggravate his condemnation, and die under sevenfold guilt, and a sevenfold curse. I will not give him the grace to think of his ways for one serious moment more; but he shall go on from bad to worse, filling up the measure of his iniquities, till death and destruction seize him in an unexpected hour, and *wrath come upon him to the uttermost**

§. 8. You think this an uncommon case; but I fear it is much otherwise. I fear there are few congregations, where the word of God has been faithfully preached, and where it has been long despised, especially by those whom it had once awakened, in which the eye of God does not see a number of such wretched souls; though it is impossible for us to pronounce upon the case who they are.

§. 9. I pretend not to say, how he will deal with you, oh reader; whether he will immediately cut you off, or seal you up under final hardness and impenitency of heart; or whether his grace may, at length, awaken you, to consider your ways, and return to him, even when your heart is grown yet more obdurate than it is at present. For to his almighty grace nothing is hard, not even to transform a rock of marble into a man and a saint. But this I will confidently say, that if you delay any longer, the time will come when you will bitterly repent of that delay; and either lament it before God in the anguish of your heart here, or curse your own folly and madness in hell; yea, when you will wish, that, dreadful as hell is, you had rather fallen into it sooner, than have lived in the midst of so many abused mercies, to render the degree of your punishment more insupportable, and your sense of it more exquisitely tormenting.

§. 10. I do therefore earnestly exhort you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the worth, and, if I may so speak, by the blood of your immortal and perishing soul, that you delay not a day, or an hour, longer. Far from *giving sleep to your eyes, or slumber to your eyelids,*† in the continued neglect

* 1 Thess. ii. 16. † Prov. vi. 4.

of this important concern, *take with you, even now, words, and turn unto the Lord;** and before you quit the place where you now are, fall upon your knees in his sacred presence, and pour out your heart in such language, or at least to some such purpose, as this:

A Prayer for one, who is tempted to delay applying to Religion, though under some Convictions of its Importance.

"OH thou righteous and holy sovereign of heaven and earth! Thou *God, in whose hand my breath is, and whose are all my ways*!† I confess, I have been far from glorifying thee, or conducting myself according to the intimations or the declarations of thy will. I have therefore reason to adore thy forbearance and goodness, that thou hast not long since stopped my breath, and cut me off from the land of the living. I adore thy patience, that I have not months and years ago, been an inhabitant of hell, where ten thousand delaying sinners are now lamenting their folly, and will be lamenting it for ever. But oh God, how possible is it, that this trifling heart of mine may, at length, betray me into the same ruin! and then, alas, into a ruin aggravated by all this patience and forbearance of thine! I am convinced, that sooner or later religion must be my serious care, or I am undone. And yet my foolish heart draws back from the yoke: yet I stretch myself upon the bed of sloth, and cry out for a *little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep*‡. Thus does my corrupt heart plead for its own indulgence, against the convictions of my better judgment. What shall I say! O Lord, save me from myself! Save me from the artifices and deceitfulness of sin: save me from the treachery of this perverse and degenerate nature of mine, and fix upon my mind what I have now been reading.

"O Lord, I am not now instructed in truths which were before quite unknown. Often have I been warned of the uncertainty of life, and of the greater uncertainty of the day of salvation; and I have formed some light purposes, and have begun to take a few irresolute steps in my way towards a return to thee. But alas, I have been only, as it were, fluttering about religion, and have never fixed upon it. All my resolutions have been scattered like smoke, or dispersed like a cloudy vapour before the wind. Oh that thou wouldst now bring these things home to my heart, with a more powerful conviction than it hath ever

* Hos. xiv. 2. † Dan. v. 23. ‡ Prov. vi. 10.

yet felt! Oh that thou wouldst pursue me with them, even when I flee from them! If I should ever grow mad enough to endeavour to escape them any more, may thy spirit address me in the language of effectual terror; and add all the most powerful methods, which thou knowest to be necessary, to awaken me from this lethargy, which must otherwise be mortal! May the sound of these things be in mine ears, *when I go out, and when I come in, when I lie down, and when I rise up**! And if the repose of the night, and the business of the day, be for a while interrupted by the impression, be it so, O God! if I may but thereby carry on my business with thee to better purpose, and at length secure a repose in thee, instead of all that terror which I now find, when *I think upon God, and am troubled*†.

'O Lord, *my flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments*‡. I am affraid lest even now, that I have begun to think of religion, thou shouldst cut me off in this critical and important moment, before my thoughts grow to any ripeness; and blast in eternal death, the first buddings and openings of it in my mind. But oh spare me, I earnestly intreat thee; for thy mercies' sake, spare me a little longer! It may be through thy grace, I shall return. It may be, if thou continuest thy patience towards me a little longer, there may be some better fruit produced by this *cumberer of the ground*‖. And may the remembrance of that long forbearance, which thou hast already exercised towards me, prevent my continuing to trifle with thee, and with my own soul! From this day, O Lord, from this hour, from this moment, may I be able to date more lasting impressions of religion, than have ever yet been made upon my heart by all that I have ever read, or all that I have heard! Amen."

* Deut. vi. 7. † Psal. lxxvii. 3. ‡ Psal. cxix. 120. ‖ Luke xiii. 7, 9.

CHAP. IV.

The Sinner arraigned and convicted.

Conviction of Guilt necessary. §. 1. A Charge of Rebellion against God advanced. §. 2. Where it is shewn, (1.) That all men are born under God's Law. §. 3. (2.) That no man hath perfectly kept it. §. 4. An appeal to the Reader's Conscience on this Head, that he hath not. §. 5. (3.) That to have broken it, is an evil inexpressibly great. §. 6. Illustrated by a more particular View of the Aggravations of this Guilt, arising, (1.) From Knowledge. §. 7. (2.) From divine Favours received. §. 8. (3.) From Convictions of Conscience overborne. §. 9. (4.) From the Strivings of God's Spirit resisted. §. 10. (5.) From Vows and Resolutions broken. §. 11. The Charge summed up, and left upon the Sinner's Conscience. §. 12. The Sinner's Confession under a general Conviction of Guilt.

§. 1. AS I am attempting to lead you to true religion, and not merely to some superficial form of it, I am sensible I can do it no otherwise, than in the way of deep humiliation. And therefore supposing you are persuaded through the divine blessing on what you have before read, to take it into consideration, I would now endeavour in the first place, with all the seriousness I can, to make you heartily sensible of your guilt before God. For I well know, that unless you are convinced of this, and affected with the conviction, all the provisions of gospel grace will be slighted, and your soul infallibly destroyed, in the midst of the noblest means appointed for its recovery. I am fully persuaded that thousands live and die in a course of sin, without feeling upon their hearts any sense that they are sinners; though they cannot for shame but own it in words. And therefore let me deal faithfully with you, though I may seem to deal roughly; for complaisance is not to give law to addresses in which the life of your soul is concerned.

§. 2. Permit me, therefore, O sinner, to consider myself at this time, as an advocate for God; as one employed in his name, to plead against thee, and to charge thee with nothing less, than being a rebel, and a traitor, against the Sovereign Majesty of heaven and earth. However thou mayest be dignified or distinguished among men; if the noblest blood run in thy veins; if thy seat were among princes, and thine arm were *the terror of the mighty in the land of the living**; it would be necessary thou shouldst be told, and told plainly, thou hast

* Ezek. xxxii. 27.

broken the law of the King of kings, and by the breach of it art become obnoxious to his righteous condemnation.

§. 3. Your conscience tells you, that you were born the natural subject of God; born under the indispensible obligation of his law. For it is most apparent, that the constitution of your rational nature, which makes you capable of receiving law from God, binds you to obey it. And it is equally evident and certain, that you have not exactly obeyed this law; nay, that you have violated it in many aggravated instances.

§. 4. Will you dare deny this? Will you dare to assert your innocence: Remember it must be a complete innocence? Yes, and a perfect righteousness too; or it can stand you in no stead, farther than to prove, that, though a condemned sinner, you are not quite so criminal as some others, and will not have quite so hot a place in hell as they. And when this is considered, will you plead not guilty to the charge? Search the records of your own conscience; for God searcheth them: ask it seriously; 'Have you never in your life sinned against God?' Solomon declared, that in his day *there was not a just man upon earth, who did good, and sinned not**: and the apostle Paul, that *all had sinned and come short of the glory of God*†: that both jews and gentiles, (which you know comprehended the whole human race,) *were all under sin*‡. And can you pretend any imaginable reason to believe the world is grown so much better since their days, that any should now plead their own case as an exception? Or will you, however, presume to arise, in the face of the omniscient Majesty of heaven, and say, I am the man?

§. 5. Supposing, as before, you have been free from those gross acts of immorality, which are so pernicious to society, that they have generally been punishable by human laws; can you pretend, that you have not, in smaller instances, violated the rules of piety, of temperance, and of charity? Is there any one person, who has intimately known you, that would not be able to testify you had said, or done something amiss? Or if others could not convict you, would not your own heart do it? Does it not prove you guilty of pride, of passion, of sensuality; of an excessive fondness for the world, and its enjoyments? of murmuring, or at least of secretly repining, against God, under the strokes of his afflictive providence; of mispending a great deal of your time; of abusing the gifts of God's bounty,

* Eccles. vii. 20. † Rom. iii. 23. ‡ Rom. iii. 9.

to vain, if not (in some instances) to pernicious purposes; of mocking him, when you have pretended to engage in his worship, *drawing near to him with your mouth and your lips, while your heart has been far from him**? Does not conscience condemn you of some one breach of the law at least? And by one breach of it you are in a sense, a scriptural sense, *become guilty of all*† ; and are as incapable of being justified before God by any obedience of your own, as if you had committed ten thousand offences. But, in reality, there are ten thousand, and more, chargeable to your account. When you come to reflect on all your sins of negligence, as well as on those of commission; on all the instances in which you have failed to do good when *it was in the power of your hand to do it*‡; on all the instances, in which acts of devotion have been omitted, especially in secret; and on all those cases in which you have shewn a stupid disregard to the honour of God, and to the temporal and eternal happiness of your fellow-creatures: when all these I say, are reviewed, the number will swell beyond all possibility of account, and force you to cry out *mine iniquities are more than the hairs of my head*‖. They will appear in such a light before you, that your own heart will charge you with countless multitudes; and how much more then *that God who is greater than your heart, and knoweth all things*¶.

§. 6. And say, sinner is it a little thing, that you have presumed to set light by the authority of the God of heaven, and to violate his law, if it had been by mere carelessness and inattention? How much more heinous, therefore, is the guilt when in so many instances you have done it knowingly and wilfully? Give me leave seriously to ask you, and let me intreat you to ask your own soul, *against whom hast thou magnified thyself? against whom hast thou exalted thy voice***, or lifted up thy rebellious hand? On whose law, oh sinner, hast thou presumed to trample? and whose friendship, and whose enmity hast thou thereby dared to affront? Is it a man like thyself, that thou hast insulted? Is it only a temporal monarch? Only one, *who can kill thy body, and then hath no more that he can do*†† ? Nay, sinner, thou wouldst not have dared to treat a temporal prince, as thou hast treated the *King eternal, immortal, and invisible*‡‡. No price could have hired thee to deal by the majesty of an earthly sovereign, as thou hast dealt by that God, before whom the cherubim and seraphim are continually bowing. Not

* Isai. xxix. 13. † Jam. ii. 10. ‡ Prov. iii. 27. ‖ Psal. xl. 12.
¶ 1 John iii. 20. ** 2 Kings xix. 22. †† Luke xii. 4. ‡‡ 1 Tim. i. 17.

one opposing or complaining, disputing or murmuring word is heard among all the celestial regions, when the intimations of his will are published to them. And who art thou, oh wretched man? who art thou, that thou shouldst oppose and provoke a God of infinite power and terror, who needs but exert one single act of his sovereign will, and thou art in a moment stripped of every possession; cut off from every hope; destroyed and rooted up from existence, if that were his pleasure; or, what is inconceivably worse, consigned over to the severest and most lasting agonies? Yet, this is the God, whom thou hast offended; whom thou hast affronted to his face, presuming to violate his express laws in his very presence: this is the God, before whom thou standest as a convicted criminal; convicted not of one or two particular offences, but of thousands and ten thousands; of a course and series of rebellions and provocations, in which thou hast persisted, more or less, ever since thou wast born; and the particulars of which have been attended with almost every conceivable circumstance of aggravation. Reflect on particulars; and deny the charge if you can.

§. 7. If knowledge be an aggravation of guilt, thy guilt O, sinner, is greatly aggravated! For thou wast born in Emmanuel's land, and God hath *written to thee the great things of his law, yet thou hast accounted them as a strange thing**. *Thou hast known to do good and hast not done it*†; and therefore to thee the omission of it has been sin indeed. *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard*‡? Wast thou not early taught the will of God, in thine infant years? Hast thou not since received repeated lessons, by which it has been inculcated again and again, in public and in private, by preaching and reading the word of God? Nay, hath not thy duty been in some instances so plain, that even without any instruction at all, thine own reason might easily have inferred it? And hast thou not also been warned of the consequences of disobedience? Hast thou not *known the righteous judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death*‖? Yet thou hast, perhaps, not only done the same, but hast taken pleasure in those that do them; hast chosen them for thy most intimate friends and companions; so as thereby to strengthen, by the force of example and converse, the hands of each other in your iniquities.

§. 8. Nay more, if divine love and mercy be any aggravation of the sins committed against it, thy crimes, O sinner, are heinously aggravated. Must thou not acknowledge it, O foolish

* Hos. viii. 12. † Jam. iv. 17. ‡ Isai. xl. 28. ‖ Rom. i. 32.

creature and unwise? hast thou not been *nourished and brought up by him* as his child, and yet hast *rebelled against him**? Did not God *take you out of the womb*† ? Did he not watch over you in your infant days, and guard you from a multitude of dangers, which the most careful parent or nurse could not have observed, or warded off? Has he not given you your rational powers? and is it not by him you have been favoured with every opportunity of improving them? Has he not every day supplied your wants, with an unwearied liberality; and added, with respect to many who will read this, the delicacies of life to its necessary supports? Has he not *heard your cry when trouble came upon you*‡; and frequently appeared for your deliverance, when in the distresses of nature you have called upon him for help? Has he not rescued you from ruin, when it seemed just ready to swallow you up; and healed your diseases, when it seemed to all about you, that *the residue of your days was cut off in the midst*‖? Or, if it had not been so, is not this long continued and uninterrupted health, which you have enjoyed for so many years, to be acknowledged as an equivalent obligation? Look round upon all your possessions, and say, what one thing have you in the world, which his goodness did not give you, and which it hath not thus far preserved to you? Add to all this, the kind notices of his will, which he hath sent you; the tender expostulations which he hath used with you, to bring you to a wiser and a better temper; and the discoveries and gracious invitations of his gospel. which you have heard, and which you have despised: and then say, whether your rebellion has not been aggravated by the vilest ingratitude, and whether that aggravation can be accounted small?

§. 9. Again, if it be any aggravation of sin to be committed against conscience, thy crimes, O sinner, have been so aggravated. Consult the records of it; and then dispute the fact if you can. *There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding*¶; and that understanding will act, and a secret conviction of being accountable to its Maker and Preserver, is inseparable from the actings of it. It is easy to object to human remonstrances, and to give things false colourings before men; but the heart often condemns, while the tongue excuses. Have you not often found it so? Has not conscience remonstrated against your past

* Isai. i. 2. † Psal. xxii. 9. ‡ Job xxvii. 9. ‖ Psal. cii. 24. Isai. xxxviii. 10.
¶ Job xxxii. 8.

conduct, and have not these remonstrances been very painful too? I have been assured by a gentleman of undoubted credit, that when he was in the pursuit of all the gayest sensualities of life, and was reckoned one of the happiest of mankind, he has seen a dog come into the room where he was among his merry companions, and has groaned inwardly, and said, 'Oh that I had been that dog!' And hast thou, sinner, felt nothing like this? has thy conscience been so stupified, so *seared with a hot iron** that it has never cried out of any of the violences which have been done it? Has it never warned thee of the fatal consequences of what thou hast done in opposition to it? These warnings are, in effect, the voice of God; they are the admonitions which he gave thee by his vicegerent in thy breast. And when his sentence for thy evil works is executed upon thee in everlasting death, thou shalt hear that voice speaking to thee again, in a louder tone, and a severer accent than before: and thou shalt be tormented with its upbraidings through eternity, because thou wouldst not, in time, hearken to its admonitions.

§. 10. Let me add further, if it be any aggravation, that sin has been committed after God has been moving by his spirit on the mind, surely your sin has been attended with that aggravation too. Under the mosaic dispensation, dark and imperfect as it was, the spirit strove with the jews; else Stephen could not have charged it upon them, that through all their generations, *they had always resisted him.*† Now surely we may much more reasonably apprehend, that he strives with sinners under the gospel. And have you never experienced any thing of this kind, even when there has been no external circumstance to awaken you, nor any pious teacher near you? Have you never perceived some secret impulse upon your mind, leading you to think of religion, urging you to an immediate consideration of it, sweetly inviting you to make trial of it, and warning you, that you would lament this stupid neglect? O sinner, why were not these happy motions attended to? Why did you not, as it were, spread out all the sails of your soul, to catch that heavenly that favourable breeze? But you have carelessly neglected it: you have overborne these kind influences: how reasonable then might the sentence have gone forth in righteous displeasure, *my spirit shall no more strive.*‡ And indeed, who can say, that it is not already gone forth? If you feel no secret agitation of mind, no remorse, no awakening, while you read such a remonstrance as this, there will be room, great room to suspect it.

* 1 Tim. iv. 2. † Acts vii. 51. ‡ Gen. vi. 3.

§. 11. There is indeed one aggravation more, which may not attend your guilt; I mean, that of being committed against solemn covenant engagements: a circumstance, which has lain heavy on the consciences of many, who, perhaps in the main series of their lives, have served God with great integrity. But let me call you to think, to what is this owing? Is it not, that you have never personally made any solemn profession of devoting yourself to God at all? have never done any thing, which has appeared to your own apprehension an action by which you made a covenant with him; though you have heard so much of his covenant, though you have been so solemnly and so tenderly invited into it? And in this view, how monstrous must this circumstance appear, which at first was mentioned as some alleviation of guilt? Yet I must add, that you are not perhaps altogether so free from guilt on this head, as you may at first imagine. I will not insist on the covenant, which your parents made in your name, when they devoted you to God in baptism; though it is really a weighty matter, and by calling yourself a christian you have professed to own and avow what they then did. But I would remind you, of what may have been more personal and express. Has your heart been, even from your youth, hardened to so uncommon a degree, that you have never cried to God in any season of danger and difficulty? And did you never mingle vows with those cries? Did you never promise, that if God would hear and help you in that hour of extremity, you would forsake your sins, and serve him as long as you lived? He heard and helped you, or you had not been reading these lines; and, by such deliverance, did, as it were, bind down your vows upon you; and therefore your guilt in the violation of them remains before him, though you are stupid enough to forget them. Nothing is forgotten, nothing is overlooked by him; and the day will come, when the record shall be laid before you too.

§. 12. And now, O sinner, think seriously with thyself, what defence thou wilt make to all this! Prepare thine apology; call thy witnesses; make thine appeal from him whom thou hast thus offended, to some superior judge, if such there be. Alas, those apologies are so weak and vain, that one of thy fellow worms may easily detect and confound them; as I will endeavour presently to shew thee. But thy foreboding conscience already knows the issue. Thou art convicted; convicted of the most aggravated offences. Thou *hast not humbled thine heart, but lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven.**

* Dan. v. 22, 23.

and *thy sentence shall come forth from his presence.** Thou hast violated his known law; thou hast despised and abused his numberless mercies; thou hast affronted conscience, his vicegerent in thy soul; thou hast resisted and grieved his spirit; thou hast trifled with him in all thy pretended submissions; and in one word, and that his own, *thou hast done evil things as thou couldst.*† Thousands are, no doubt, already in hell, whose guilt never equalled thine; and it is astonishing, that God has spared thee to read this representation of thy case, or to make any pause upon it. Oh waste not so precious a moment, but enter, as attentively, and as humbly as thou canst, into those reflections, which suit a case so lamentable, and so terrible as thine!

The Confession of a Sinner, convinced in general of his Guilt.

"O GOD! thou injured sovereign, thou all penetrating and almighty judge! What shall I say to this charge? Shall I pretend I am wronged by it, and stand on the defence in thy presence? I dare not do it; for *thou knowest my foolishness, and none of my sins are hid from thee.*‡ My conscience tells me that a denial of my crimes would only increase them, and add new fuel to the fire of thy deserved wrath. *If I justify myself, my own mouth will condemn me; if I say, I am perfect, it will also prove me perverse*‖. For *innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are,* as I have been told in thy name, *more than the hairs of my head, and therefore my heart faileth me.*¶ I am more guilty, than it is possible for another to declare or represent. My heart speaks more than any other accuser. And thou, O Lord, art much *greater than my heart, and knowest all things***.

"What has my life been but a course of rebellion against thee? It is not this or that particular action alone, I have to lament. Nothing has been right in its principles, and views, and ends. My whole soul has been disordered. All my thoughts, my affections, my desires, my pursuits, have been wretchedly alienated from thee. I have acted, as if I had hated thee, who art infinitely the loveliest of all beings; as if I had been contriving, how I might tempt thee to the uttermost, and weary out thy patience, marvellous as it is. My actions have been evil; my words yet more evil than they; and, O blessed God, my

* Psal. xvii. 2. † Jer. iii. 5. ‡ Psal. lxix. 5.
‖ Job ix. 20. ¶ Psal. xl. 12. ** 1 John iii. 20.

heart, how much more corrupt than either! What an inexhausted fountain of sin has there been in it! A fountain of original corruption, which mingled its bitter streams with the days of early childhood; and which, alas, flows on even to this day, beyond what actions or words could express. I see this to have been the case, with regard to what I can particularly survey. But oh, how many months, and years, have I forgotten? concerning which I only know this, in the general, that they are much like those I can remember; except it be, that I have been growing worse and worse, and provoking thy patience more and more, though every new exercise of it was more and more wonderful.

"And how am I astonished, that thy forbearanee is still continued! It is, because thou art *God and not man.** Had I, a sinful worm, been thus injured, I could not have endured it. Had I been a prince, I had longsince done justice on any rebel, whose crimes had borne but a distant resemblance to mine. Had I been a parent, I had long since cast off the ungrateful child, who had made me such a return as I have all my life long been making to thee, Oh thou father of my spirit? The flame of natural affection would have been extinguished; and his sight, and his very name, would have become hateful to me. Why then, O Lord, am I not *cast out from thy presence?*† Why am I not sealed up under an irreversible sentence of destruction! That I live, I owe to thine indulgence. But oh, if there be yet any way of deliverance, if there be yet any hope for so guilty a creature, may it be opened upon me by thy gospel and thy grace! And if any farther alarm, humiliation, and terror, be necessary to my security and salvation, may I meet them, and bear them all! Wound mine heart, O Lord, so that thou wilt but afterwards *heal it; and break it in pieces,* if thou wilt but at length condescend to *bind it up.*‡

* Hos. xi. 9. † Jer. lii. 3. ‡ Hos. vi. 1.

CHAP. V.

The Sinner stripped of his vain Pleas.

The Vanity of those Pleas which Sinners may secretly confide in, so apparent, that they will be ashamed at last to mention them before God. §. 1, 2. Such as, (1.) That they descended from pious Parents. §. 3. (2.) That they had attended to the speculative Part of Religion. §. 4. (3.) That they had entertained some Notions. §. 5. (4.) That they had expressed a zealous Regard to Religion, and attended the outward Forms of Worship with those they apprehended the purest Churches. §. 6, 7. (5.) That they had been free from gross Immoralities. §. 8. (6.) That they did not think the Consequence of neglecting Religion would have been so fatal. §. 9. (7.) That they could not do otherwise than they did. §. 10. Concluson. §. 11. With the Meditation of a convinced Sinner, giving up his vain Pleas before God.

§. 1. MY last discourse left the sinner in a very alarming, and a very pitiable circumstance; a criminal convicted at the bar of God, disarmed of all pretences to perfect innocence and sinless obedience, and consequently obnoxious to the sentence of a holy law, which can make no allowance for any transgression, no, not for the least; but pronounces death, and a curse, against every act of disobedience: how much more then against those numberless and aggravated acts of rebellion, of which, O sinner, thy conscience hath condemned thee before God? I would hope, some of my readers will ingenuously fall under the conviction, and not think of making any apology: for sure I am, that humbly to plead guilty at the divine bar, is the most decent, and, all things considered, the most prudent thing that can be done in such an unhappy circumstance. Yet I know the treachery, and the self-flattery, of a sinful and corrupted heart. I know what excuses it makes, and how, when it is driven from one refuge, it flies to another, to fortify itself against full conviction, and to persuade, not merely another, but itself, "that if it has been in some instances to blame, it is not quite so criminal as was represented: that there are at least considerations that plead in its favour, which, if they cannot justify, will in some degree excuse." A secret reserve of this kind, sometimes perhaps scarce formed into a distinct reflection, breaks the force of conviction, and often prevents that deep humiliation before God, which is the happiest token of approaching deliverance. I will therefore examine into some of these particulars; and for that purpose would seriously ask thee, O sinner, what thou hast to offer in arrest of judgment? What plea thou canst urge for thyself, why the sentence of God should not go forth against thee, and why thou shouldst not fall into the hands of his justice?

§. 2. But this I must premise, that the question is not, how thou wouldst answer to me, a weak sinful worm like thyself, who am shortly to stand with thee at the same bar: *(the Lord grant that I may find mercy of the Lord in that day* !)* But, what wilt thou reply to thy judge? What couldst thou plead, if thou wast now actually before his tribunal; where, to multiply vain words, and to frame idle apologies, would be but to increase thy guilt and provocation? Surely the very thought of his presence must supersede a thousand of those trifling excuses, which now sometimes impose on *a generation that are pure in their own eyes, though they are not washed from their filthiness*† : or while they are conscious of their own impurities, *trust in words that cannot profit*‡, and *lean upon broken reeds* ‖.

§. 3. You will not, to be sure, in such a circumstance plead, "that you are descended from pious parents." That was indeed your privilege; and woe be to you, that you have abused it, and *forsaken the God of your fathers*¶. Ishmael was immediately descended from Abraham, the friend of God; and Esau was the son of Isaac, who was born according to the promise: yet you know they were both cut off from the blessing, to which they apprehended they had a kind of hereditary claim. You may remember, that our Lord does not only speak of one who could call Abraham father, who was *tormented in flames***; but expressly declares, that *many of the children of the kingdom shall be shut out of it;* and when others come from the most distant parts to sit down in it, shall be distinguished from their companions in misery, only by louder accents of lamentation, and more furious *gnashing of teeth*††.

§. 4. Nor will you then presume to plead, "that you had exercised your thoughts about the speculative part of religion." For to what end can this serve but to increase your condemnation! Since you have broken God's law, since you have contradicted the most obvious and apparent obligations of religion, to have enquired into it, and argued upon it, is a circumstance that proves your guilt more audacious. What, did you think religion was merely an exercise of men's wit, and the amusement of their curiosity? If you argued about it, on the principles of common sense, you must have judged and proved it to be a practical thing: and if it was so, why did you not practise accordingly? You knew the particular branches of it: and why then did you not attend to every one of them? To have pleaded

* 2 Tim. i. 18. † Prov. xxx. 12. ‡ Jer. vii. 8. ‖ Isai. xxxvi. 6.
¶ 2 Chron. vii. 22. ** Luke xvi. 23, 24. †† Matt. viii. 11, 12.

an unavoidable ignorance, would have been the happiest plea that could have remained for you: nay, an actual, though faulty ignorance, would have been some little allay of your guilt. But if, by your own confession, you have *known your master's will, and have not done it*, you bear witness against yourself, that you deserve to *be beaten with many stripes**.

§. 5. Nor yet again will it suffice to say, "that you have had right notions, both of the doctrines and the precepts of religion." Your advantage for practising it was therefore the greater: but understanding, and acting right, can never go for the same thing, in the judgment of God, or of man. In believing there is one God, you have done well; but the *devils also believe and tremble*†. In acknowledging Christ to be the Son of God, and the Holy One, you have done well too; but you know *the unclean spirits* made this very orthodox confession‡, and yet they are *reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day*‖. And will you place any secret confidence in that, which might be pleaded by the infernal spirits, as well as by you?

§. 6. But perhaps you may think of pleading, that "you have actually done something in religion." Having judged what faith was the soundest, and what worship the purest, "you entered yourself into those societies, where such articles of faith were professed, and such forms of worship were practised; and among these you have signalized yourself, by the exactness of your attendance, by the zeal with which you have espoused their cause, and by the earnestness with which you have contended for such principles and practices."—O sinner, I much fear that this zeal of thine, about the circumstantials of religion, will swell thine account, rather than be allowed in abatement of it. He that searches thine heart, knows from whence it arose, and how far it extended. Perhaps, he sees that it was all hypocrisy; an artful veil, under which thou wast carrying on thy mean designs for this world; while the sacred names of God and religion were profaned and prostituted in the basest manner; and if so, thou art cursed with a distinguished curse, for so daring an insult on the divine omniscience, as well as justice. Or perhaps the earnestness, with which you have been *contending for the faith and worship, which was once delivered to the saints*¶, or which, it is possible, you may have rashly concluded to be that, might be mere pride and bitterness of spirit: and all the zeal you have expressed might

* Luke xii. 47. † James ii. 19. ‡ Luke iv. 34, 41. ‖ Jude, ver. 6. ¶ Jude, ver. 3.

possibly arise from a confidence of your own judgment, from an impatience of contradiction, or some secret malignity of spirit which delighted itself in condemning, and even in worrying others; yea, which (if I may be allowed the expression,) fiercely preyed upon religion, as the tyger upon the lamb, to turn it into a nature most contrary to its own. And shall this screen you before the great tribunal? shall it not rather awaken the displeasure, it is pleaded to avert?

§. 7. But say, that this your zeal for notions and forms has been ever so well intended, and so far as it has gone, ever so well conducted too; what will that avail towards vindicating thee in so many instances of negligence and disobedience, as are recorded against thee in the book of God's remembrance? Were the revealed doctrines of the gospel to be earnestly maintained, (as indeed they ought;) and was the great practical purpose for which they were revealed to be forgot? Was the very mint, and anise, and cummin to be tithed, and were *the weightier matters of the law to be omitted**; even that love to God, which is its *first and great command*†. Oh how wilt thou be able to vindicate even the justest sentence thou hast passed on others for their infidelity, or for their disobedience, without being *condemned out of thine own mouth*‡!

§. 8. Will you then plead, "your fair moral character, your works of righteousness and of mercy?" Had your obedience to the law of God been complete, the plea might be allowed, as important and valid. But I have supposed and proved above, that conscience testifies to the contrary; and you will not now dare to contradict it. I add farther, had these works of yours, which you now urge, proceeded from a sincere love to God, and a genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you would not have thought of pleading them, any otherwise than as an evidence of your interest in the gospel covenant, and in the blessings of it, procured by the righteousness and blood of the Redeemer: and that faith, had it been sincere, would have been attended with such deep humility, and with such solemn apprehensions of the divine holiness and glory, that instead of pleading any works of your own before God, you would rather have implored his pardon, for the mixture of sinful imperfection attending the very best of them. Now, as you are a stranger to this humbling and sanctifying principle, (which here, in this address, I suppose my reader to be,) it is absolutely necessary you should be plainly and faithfully told, that neither sobriety,

* Matt. xxiii. 23. † Matt. xxii. 38. ‡ Luke xix. 22.

nor honesty, nor humanity, will justify you before the tribunal of God, when he *lays judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet**, and examines all your actions, and all your thoughts, with the strictest severity. You have not been a drunkard, an adulterer, or a robber. So far it is well. You stand before a righteous God, who will do you ample justice: and therefore will not condemn you for drunkenness, adultery, or robbery. But you have forgotten him, your parent and your benefactor; you have *cast off fear and restrained prayer before him*† ; you have despised the blood of his Son, and all the immortal blessings that he purchased with it. For this therefore are you judged and condemned. And as for any thing that has looked like virtue and humanity in your temper and conduct, the exercise of it has in a great measure been its own reward, if there were any thing more than form and artifice in it; and the various bounties of divine providence to you amidst all your numberless provocations, have been a thousand times more than an equivalent for such defective and imperfect virtues as these. You remain therefore chargeable with the guilt of a thousand offences, for which you have no excuse; though there are some other instances, in which you did not grossly offend. And those good works, in which you have been so ready to trust, will no more vindicate you in his awful presence, than a man's kindness to his poor neighbours would be allowed as a plea in arrest of judgment, when he stood convicted of high treason against his prince.

§. 9 But you will, perhaps, be ready to say, 'you did not expect all this: you did not think the consequences of neglecting religion would have been so fatal.' And why did you not think it? why did you not examine more attentively, and more impartially? why did you suffer the pride and folly of your vain heart, to take up with such superficial appearances, and trust the light suggestions of your own prejudiced mind, against the express declaration of the word of God? Had you reflected on his character, as the supreme Governor of the world, you would have seen the necessity of such a day of retribution as we are now referring to. Had you regarded the scripture, the divine authority of which you professed to believe, every page might have taught you to expect it. 'You did not think of religion!' And of what were you thinking, when you forgot or neglected it? Had you too much employment of another kind? Of what kind, I beseech you? What end could you

* Isai. xxviii. 17. † Job xv. 4.

propose by any thing else, of equal moment? Nay, with all your engagements, conscience will tell you, that there have been seasons, when for want of thought, time and life have been a burden to you: yet you guarded against thought as an enemy, and cast up (as it were) an intrenchment of inconsideration around you on every side, as if it had been to defend you from the most dangerous invasion. God knew you were thoughtless; and therefore he sent you *line upon line and precept upon precept**, in such plain language, that it needed no genius or study to understand it. He tried you too with afflictions, as well as with mercies, to awaken you out of your fatal lethargy; and yet when awakened, you would lie down again upon the bed of sloth. And now, pleasing as your dreams might be, *you must lie down in sorrow*†. Reflection has at last overtaken you, and must be heard as a tormentor, since it might not be heard as a friend.

§. 10. But some may perhaps imagine, that one important apology is yet unheard, and that there may be room to say, 'you were by the necessity of your nature, impelled to those things, which are now charged upon you as crimes; whereas it was not in your power to have avoided them, in the circumstances in which you were placed.' If this will do any thing, it indeed promises to do much; so much, that it will amount to nothing. If I were disposed to answer you upon the folly and madness of your own principles, I might say, that the same consideration, which proves it was necessary for you to offend, proves also that it is necessary for God to punish you; and that, indeed, he cannot but do it: and I might farther say, with an excellent writer of our own age‡, 'That the same prinples which destroy the injustice of sins, destroy the injustice of punishment too.' But if you cannot admit this, if you should still reply in spite of principle, that it must be unjust to punish you for an action utterly and absolutely unavoidable; I really think you would answer right. But in that answer you will contradict your own scheme, (as I observed above;) and I leave your conscience to judge, what sort of a scheme that must be which would make all kind of punishment unjust: for the argument will on the whole be the same, whether with regard to human punishment or divine. It is a scheme full of confusion and horror. You would not, I am sure, take it from a servant who had robbed you, and then fired your house: you would never inwardly believe, that he could not have helped it: or

* Isai. xxviii. 10. † Isai. l. 11.

‡ Bp. of Bristol's Analogy, &c. page 135. octavo edit.

think, that he had fairly excused himself by such a plea. And I am persuaded, you would be so far from presuming to offer it to God at the great day, that you would not venture to turn it into a prayer even now. Imagine that you saw a malefactor dying, with such words as these in his mouth: 'O God, it is true, I did indeed rob and murder my fellow-creatures; but thou knowest, that, as my circumstances were ordered, I could not do otherwise: my will was irresistibly determined by the motives which thou didst set before me; and I could as well have shaken the foundations of the earth, or darkened the sun in the firmament, as have resisted the impulse which bore me on.' I put it to your conscience, whether you would not look on such a speech as this with detestation, as one enormity added to another. Yet if the excuse would have any weight in your mouth, it would have equal weight in his; or would be equally applicable to any the most shocking occasion. But indeed it is so contrary to the plainest principles of common reason, that I can hardly persuade myself, any one could seriously and thoroughly believe it; and should imagine my time very ill employed here, if I were to set myself to combat those pretences to argument, by which the wantonness of human wit has attempted to varnish it over.

§. 11. You see then, on the whole, the vanity of all your pleas, and how easily the most plausible of them might be silenced, by a mortal man like yourself: how much more then by him, who searches all hearts, and can, in a moment, flash in upon the conscience a most powerful and irresistible conviction? What then can you do, while you stand convicted in the presence of God? What should you do, but hold your peace under an inward sense of your inexcusable guilt, and prepare yourself to hear the sentence which his law pronounces against you? You must feel the execution of it, if the gospel does not at length deliver you; and you must feel something of the terror of it, before you can be excited to seek to that gospel for deliverance.

The Meditation of a convinced Sinner, giving up his vain Pleas before God.

DEPLORABLE condition, to which I am indeed reduced! *I have sinned; and what shall I say unto thee, O thou preserver of men* ?* What shall I dare to say? Fool that I was,

* Job. vii. 20.

to amuse myself with such trifling excuses as these, and to imagine, they could have any weight in thy tremendous presence; or that I should be able so much as to mention them there! I cannot presume to do it. I am silent and confounded. My hopes, alas, are slain; and my soul itself is ready to die too; so far as an immortal soul can die: and I am almost ready to say, O that it could die entirely! I am indeed a criminal in the hands of justice, quite disarmed, and stripped of the weapons in which I trusted. Dissimulation can only add provocation to provocation. I will therefore plainly and freely own it. I have acted, as if I thought God *was altogether such a one as myself: but,* he hath said, *I will reprove thee; I will set thy sins in order before thine eyes**, will marshal them in battle array. And oh, what a terrible kind of host do they appear? and how do they surround me beyond all possibility of an escape! Oh my soul, they have, as it were, taken thee prisoner; and they are bearing thee away to the divine tribunal.

Thou must appear before it! Thou must see the awful eternal Judge, who *tries the very reins* †; and who needs no other evidence, for he has *himself been witness*‡ to all thy rebellion. Thou must see him, O my soul, sitting in judgment upon thee: and when he is *strict to mark iniquity*‖, how wilt thou *answer him for one of a thousand*¶! And if thou canst not answer him, in what language will he speak to thee! Lord, as things at present stand, I can expect no other language than that of condemnation. And what a condemnation is it! Let me reflect upon it! Let me read my sentence before I hear it finally and irreversibly passed! I know, he has recorded it in his word; and I know, in the general, that the representation is made with a gracious design. I know, that he would have us alarmed, that we may not be destroyed. Speak to me, therefore, O God, while thou speakest not for the last time, and in circumstances when thou wilt hear me no more. Speak in the language of effectual terror, so that it be not to speak me into final despair. And let thy word, however painful in its operation, be *quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword***. Let me not vainly flatter myself: let me not be left a wretched prey to those who would *prophecy smooth things to me*††, till I am sealed up under wrath, and feel thy justice piercing my soul, and *the poison of thine arrows drinking up all my spirits*‡‡.

* Psal. l. 21. † Jer. xvii. 10. ‡ Jer. xxix. 23. ‖ Psal. cxxx. 3.
¶ Job ix. 3. ** Heb. iv. 12. †† Isai. xxx. 10. ‡‡ Job vi. 4.

Before I enter upon the particular view, I know in the general, that *it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God**. O thou living God, in one sense I am already fallen into thine hands. I am become obnoxious to thy displeasure, justly obnoxious to it; and whatever thy sentence may be when it *comes forth from thy presence*†, I must condemn myself, and justify thee. Thou canst not treat me with more severity, than mine iniquities have deserved: and how bitter soever that *cup of trembling may be*‡, which thou shalt appoint for me, I give judgment against myself, that I deserve to *wring out the very dregs of it*‖.

CHAP. VI.

The Sinner sentenced.

The Sinner called upon to hear his Sentence, §. 1, 2, God's Law does now in general pronounce a Curse: §. 3. It pronounces Death. §. 4. And being turned into Hell. §. 5. The Judgment Day shall come. §. 6. The Solemnity of that grand Process described, according to Scriptural Representations of it. §. 7, 8. With a particular Illustration of the Sentence, *Depart Accursed, &c.* §. 9. The Execution will certainly and immediately follow. §. 10. The Sinner warned to prepare for enduring it. §. 11. The Reflection of a Sinner struck with the Terror of this Sentence.

§. 1. HEAR, O sinner, *and I will speak*¶ yet once more, as in the name of God, of God, thine almighty Judge; who if thou dost not attend to his servants, will ere long speak unto thee in a more immediate manner, with an energy and terror which thou shalt not be able to resist.

§. 2. Thou hast been convicted, as in his presence. Thy pleas have been over-ruled; or rather, they have been silenced. It appears before God, it appears to thine own conscience, that thou hast nothing more to offer in arrest of judgment; therefore hear thy sentence, and summon up, if thou canst, all the powers of thy soul to bear the execution of it. *It is indeed a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment; but he that now judgeth thee, is the Lord***. Hear therefore, and tremble, while I tell thee, how he will speak to thee; or rather, while I shew thee, from express scripture, how he doth even

* Heb. x. 31. † Psal. xvii. 2. ‡ Isai. li. 17.
‖ Psal. lxxv. 8. ¶ Job xlii. 4. ** 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

now speak, and what is the authentic and recorded sentence of his word, even of his word who hath said, *Heaven and earth shall pass away; but not one tittle of my word shall ever pass away**.

§. 3. The law of God speaks, not to thee alone, O sinner, not to thee by any particular address; but in a most universal language, it speaks to all transgressors, and levels its terrors against all offences, great or small, without any exception. And this is its language: *cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*†. This is its voice to the whole world; and this it speaks to thee. Its awful contents are thy personal concern, O reader; and thy conscience knows it. Far from continuing in all things that are written therein to do them, thou canst not but be sensible, that *innumerable evils have compassed thee about*‡. It is then manifest, thou art the man, whom it condemns; thou art even now *cursed with a curse*‖, as God emphatically speaks; with the curse of the most high God: yea, *all the curses which are written in the book of the law, are pointed against thee*¶. God may righteously execute any of them upon thee in a moment; and though thou at present feelest none of them, yet, if infinite mercy doth not prevent, it is but a little while, and they will come into thy bowels like water, till thou art burst asunder with them, and shall penetrate *like oil into thy bones***.

§. 4. Thus saith the Lord, *the soul that sinneth, it shall die*††. But thou hast sinned, and therefore thou art under a sentence of death! And, O unhappy creature, of what a death! What will the end of these things be? That the agonies of dissolving nature shall seize thee; that thy soul shall be torn away from thy languishing body, and thou *return to the dust from whence thou wast taken*‡‡: this is indeed one awful effect of sin. In these affecting characters has God, through all nations and all ages of men, written the awful register and memorial of his holy abhorrence of it, and righteous displeasure against it. But alas, all this solemn pomp and horror of dying, is but the opening of the dreadful scene. It is but a rough kind of stroke, by which the fetters are knocked off, when the criminal is led out to torture and execution.

§. 5. Thus saith the Lord, *the wicked shall be turned into hell, even all the nations that forget God*‖‖. Though there be whole nations of them, their multitudes and their power shall be no defence to them. They shall be driven into hell toge-

* Mat. v. 18. † Gal. iii. 10. ‡ Psalm. xl. 12. ‖ Mal. iii. 9.
¶ Deut xxix. 20. ** Psal. cix. 18. †† Ezek. xviii. 4. ‡‡ Psal. civ. 29.
‖‖ Psal. ix. 17.

ther; into that flaming prison, which divine vengeance hath prepared; into Tophet, which is ordained of old, even for royal sinners as well as for others, so little can any human distinction protect! *He hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, shall kindle it;* * and the flaming torrent shall flow in upon it so fast, that it shall be turned into a sea of liquid fire; or, as the scripture also expresses it, *a lake burning with fire and brimstone for ever and ever.*† This is the second death; and the death, to which thou, O sinner, by the word of God art doomed.

§. 6. And shall this sentence stand upon record in vain? Shall the law speak it, and the gospel speak it? And shall it never be pronounced more audibly? and will God never require and excute the punishment? He will, O sinner, require it; and he will execute it; though he may seem for a while to delay. For well dost thou know, that *he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the whole world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, of which he has given assurance in having raised him from the dead.*‡ And when God judgeth the world, O reader, whoever thou art, he will judge thee. And while I remind thee of it, I would also remember, that he will judge me. And *knowing the terror of the Lord*‖ that I may *deliver my own soul*¶, I would with all plainness and sincerity labour to deliver thine.

§. 7. I therefore repeat the solemn warning: thou, O sinner, shalt *stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.*** Thou shalt see that pompous appearance; the description of which is grown so familiar to thee, that the repetition of it makes no impression on thy mind. But surely, stupid as thou now art, the shrill trumpet of the arch-angel shall shake thy very soul; and if nothing else can awaken and alarm thee, the convulsions and flames of a dissolving world shall do it.

§. 8. Dost thou really think, that the intent of Christ's final appearance is only to recover his people from the grave, and to raise them to glory and happiness? Whatever assurance thou hast, that there shall be a resurrection of the just; thou hast the same, that there shall also be *a resurrection of the unjust*: †† that *he shall separate the rising dead one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats,* ‡‡ with equal certainty, and with infinitely greater ease. Or can you

* Isai. xxx. 33. † Rev. xxi. 8. ‡ Acts xvii. 31. ‖ 2 Cor. v. 11.
¶ Ezek. xxxiii. 9. ** 2 Cor. v. 10. †† Acts xxiv. 15. ‡‡ Matt. xxv. 32.

imagine, that he will only make an example of some flagrant and notorious sinners, when it is said, that *all the dead, both small and great, shall stand before God*;* and that even, *he who knew not his master's will*, and consequently seems of all others to have had the fairest excuse for his omission to obey it, yet even he, for that very omission, *shall be beaten, though with fewer stripes*?† Or can you think, that a sentence to be delivered with so much pomp and majesty, a sentence by which the righteous judgment of God is to be revealed, and to have its most conspicuous and final triumph, will be inconsiderable; or the punishment to which it shall consign the sinner, be slight or tolerable? There would have been little reason to apprehend that, even if we had been left barely to our own conjectures, what that sentence should be. But this is far from being the case: our Lord Jesus Christ, in his infinite condescension and compassion, has been pleased to give us a copy of the sentence, and no doubt, a most exact copy; and the words which contain it, are worthy of being inscribed on every heart. The king, amidst all the splendor and dignity in which he shall then appear, *shall say unto those on his right hand, come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!*‡ *And where the word of a king is, there is power*‖ indeed. And these words have a power, which may justly animate the heart of the humble christian, under the most overwhelming sorrow, and may fill him with *joy unspeakable and full of glory*.¶ To be pronounced the blessed of the Lord! to be called to a kingdom! to the immediate, the everlasting inheritance of it! and of such a kingdom! so well prepared, so glorious, so complete, so exquisitely fitted for the delight and entertainment of such creatures, so formed and so renewed, that it shall appear worthy the eternal councils of God to have contrived it, worthy his eternal love to have prepared it, and to have delighted itself with the views of bestowing it upon his people: behold a blessed hope indeed! a lively glorious hope, to which we are *begotten again by the resurrection of Christ from the dead*,** and formed by the sanctifying influence of the spirit of God upon our minds. But it is a hope from which thou, O sinner, art at present excluded: and methinks, that might be grievous; to reflect, "these gracious words shall Christ speak to some, to multitudes, but not to me: on me there is no blessedness pronounced: for me there is

* Rev. xx. 12. † Luke xii. 48. ‡ Matt. xxv. 34.
‖ Eccles. viii. 4. ¶ 1 Pet. i. 8. ** 1 Pet. i. 3.

no kingdom prepared." But is that all? Alas, sinner, our Lord hath given thee a dreadful counterpart to this. He has told us what he will say to thee, if thou continuest what thou art; to thee and all the nations of the impenitent and unbelieving world, be they ever so numerous, be the rank of particular criminals ever so great. He shall say to the kings of the earth, who have been rebels against him, to *the great and rich men, and the chief captains and the mighty men, as well as to every bondman and every freeman,** of inferior rank; *depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*†. Oh, pause upon these weighty words, that thou mayest enter into something of the importance of them!

§. 9. He will say, *depart:* you shall be driven from his presence with disgrace and infamy: from him, the source of life and blessedness, in a nearness to whom all the inhabitants of heaven continually rejoice: you shall depart 'accursed:' you have broken God's law, and its curse falls upon you; and you are, and shall be under that curse, that abiding curse: from that day forward you shall be regarded by God, and all his creatures, as an accursed and abominable thing; as the most detestable and the most miserable part of the creation. You shall go into fire: and oh, consider, into what fire! Is it merely into one fierce blaze, which shall consume you in a moment, though with exquisite pain? That were terrible. But oh such terrors are not to be named with these. Thine, sinner, is everlasting fire: it is that, which our Lord hath in such awful terms described as prevailing there, where *their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*; and then says it a second time, *where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;* and again, in wonderful compassion a third time, *where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*‡. Nor was it originally prepared, or principally intended for you: it was prepared for the devil and his angels; for those first grand rebels, who were immediately upon their fall doomed to it: and since you have taken part with them in their apostacy, you must sink with them into that flaming ruin; and sink so much the deeper, as you have despised a Saviour, who was never offered to them. These must be your companions, and your tormentors, with whom you must dwell for ever. And, is it I that say this? or says not the law, and the gospel, the same? Does not the Lord Jesus Christ expressly say it, who is *the faithful and true witness,*¶ even he, who himself is to pronounce the sentence?

* Rev. vi. 15. † Matt. xxv. 41. ‡ Mark ix. 44, 46, 48. ¶ Rev. iii. 14.

§. 10. And when it is thus pronounced, and pronounced by him, shall it not also be executed? Who could imagine the contrary? who could imagine there should be all this pompous declaration, to fill the mind only with vain terror, and that this sentence should vanish into smoak? You may easily apprehend, that this would be a greater reproach to the divine administration, than if sentence were never to be passed. And therefore, we might easily have inferred the execution of it, from the process of the preceding judgment. But lest the treacherous heart of a sinner should deceive him with so vain a hope, the assurance of that execution is immediately added in very memorable terms. It shall be done: it shall immediately be done. Then, on that very day, while the sound of it is yet in their ears, *the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment*:* and thou, O reader, whoever thou art, being found in their number shalt go away with them; shalt be driven on among all these wretched multitudes, and plunged with them into eternal ruin. The wide gates of hell shall be open to receive thee; they shall be shut upon thee for ever to inclose thee; and be fast barred, by the almighty hand of divine justice, to prevent all hope, all possibility of escape for ever.

§. 11. And now *prepare* thyself *to meet the Lord thy God*:† summon up all the resolution of thy mind, to endure such a sentence, such an execution as this: for *he will not meet thee as a man*‡; whose heart may sometimes fail him when about to exert a needful act of severity, so that compassion may prevail against reason and justice. No, he will meet thee as a God, whose schemes and purposes are all immoveable as his throne. I therefore testify to thee in his name this day, that if God be true, he will thus speak; and that if he be able, he will thus act. And on supposition of thy continuance in thine impenitence and unbelief, thou art brought into this miserable case; that if God be not either false or weak, thou art undone, thou art eternally undone.

The Reflection of a Sinner, struck with the Terror of this Sentence.

"WRETCH that I am! What shall I do, or whither shall I flee? *I am weighed in the balance and am found wanting*‖." This is indeed my doom; the doom I am to expect from the mouth of Christ himself, from the mouth of him, that died for

* Matt. xxv. 46. † Amos iv. 12. ‡ Isai. xlvii. 3. ‖ Dan. v. 27.

the redemption and salvation of men. Dreadful sentence! and so much the more dreadful, when considered in that view! To what shall I look to save me from it? To whom shall I call? Shall I say *to the rocks, fall upon me, and to the hills, cover me**? What shall I gain by that? Were I indeed overwhelmed with rocks and mountains, they could not conceal me from the notice of his eye; and his hand could reach me with as much ease there, as any where else.

"Wretch indeed that I am! Oh that I had never been born! O that I had never known the dignity and prerogative of the rational nature! Fatal prerogative indeed, that renders me obnoxious to condemnation and wrath! Oh that I had never been instructed in the will of God at all, rather than that being thus instructed, I should have disregarded and transgressed it! Would to God, I had been allied to the meanest of the human race, to them that come nearest to the state of the brutes, rather than that I should have had my lot in cultivated life, amidst so many of the improvements of reason, and (dreadful reflection!) amidst so many of the advantages of religion too! and thus to have perverted all to my own destruction!—Oh that God would take away this rational soul! But alas, it will live for ever; will live to feel the agonies of eternal death.—Why have I seen the beauties and glories of a world like this, to exchange it for that flaming prison! Why have I tasted so many of my Creator's bounties, to wring out at last the dregs of his wrath! Why have I known the delights of social life and friendly converse, to exchange them for the horrid company of devils and damned spirits in Tophet! Oh, *who can dwell with them in devouring flames! who can lie down with them in everlasting, everlasting, everlasting burnings*†!

"But whom have I to blame in all this, but myself? What have I to accuse, but my own stupid incorrigible folly? On what is all this terrible ruin to be charged, but on this one fatal cursed cause, that having broken God's law, I rejected his gospel too?

"Yet stay, O my soul, in the midst of all these doleful, foreboding complaints. Can I say, that I have finally rejected the gospel? Am I not to this day under the sound of it? The sentence is not yet gone forth against me, in so determinate a manner as to be utterly irreversible. Through all this gloomy prospect one ray of hope breaks in, and it is possible I may be delivered.

* Luke xxiii. 30. † Isai. xxxiii, 14.

" Reviving thought! Rejoice in it, O my soul, though it be with trembling; and turn immediately to that God, who though provoked by ten thousand offences, has not yet sworn in his wrath, that thou shalt never be permitted to hold farther intercourse with him, or *to enter into his rest**.

" I do then, O blessed Lord, prostrate myself in the dust before thee. I own, I am a condemned and miserable creature. But my language is that of the humble publican, *God be merciful to me a sinner*† ! Some general and confused apprehensions I have of a way, by which I may possibly escape. O God, whatever that way is, shew it me, I beseech thee! Point it out so plainly, that I may not be able to mistake it! And Oh, reconcile my heart to it, be it ever so humbling, be it ever so painful!

" Surely, Lord, I have much to learn; but be thou my teacher! Stay for a little thine uplifted hand; and in thine infinite compassion delay the stroke, till I enquire a little farther, how I may finally avoid it!"

CHAP. VII.

The helpless State of the Sinner under Condemnation.

The Sinner urged to consider, how he can be saved from this impending Ruin. §. 1, 2. (1.) Not by any Thing he can offer. §. 3. (2.) Nor by any Thing he can endure. § 4. (3.) Nor by any Thing he can do in the Course of future Duty. §. 5. (4.) Nor by any Alliance with Fellow-Sinners, on Earth, or in Hell. §. 6.—8. (5.) Nor by any Interposition, or Intercession of Angels or Saints in his Favour. §. 9. Hint of the only Method, to be afterwards more largely explained, ibid. The Lamentation of a Sinner in this miserable Condition.

§. 1. SINNER, thou hast heard the sentence of God, as it stands upon record in his sacred and immutable word. And wilt thou lie down under it in everlasting despair? Wilt thou make no attempt to be delivered from it, when it speaks nothing less than eternal death to thy soul? If a criminal, condemned by human laws, has but the least shadow of hope, that he may possibly escape, he is all attention to it. If there be a friend, who he thinks can help him, with what strong importunity does he intreat the interposition of that friend? And even while he is before the judge, how difficult is it often to force him away from the bar, while the cry of mercy, mercy, mercy may be heard,

* Psal. xcv. 11. † Luke xviii. 13.

though it be never so unseasonable? A mere possibility that it may make some impression, makes him eager in it, and unwilling to be silenced and removed.

§. 2. Wilt thou not then, O sinner, ere yet execution is done, that execution which may perhaps be done this very day, wilt thou not cast about in thy thoughts, what measures may be taken for deliverance? Yet what measures can be taken? Consider attentively, for it is an affair of moment. Thy wisdom, thy power, thy eloquence, or thine interest, can never be exerted on a greater occasion. If thou canst help thyself, do. If thou hast any secret source of relief, go not out of thyself for other assistance. If thou hast any sacrifice to offer; if thou hast any strength to exert, yea, if thou hast any allies on earth, or in the invisible world, who can defend and deliver thee, take thine own way, so that thou mayest but be delivered at all, that we may not see thy ruin. But say, O sinner, in the presence of God, what sacrifice thou wilt present, what strength thou wilt exert, what allies thou wilt have recourse to, on so urgent, so hopeless an occasion. For hopeless I must indeed pronounce it, if such methods are taken.

§. 3. The justice of God is injured: hast thou any atonement to make to it? If thou wast brought to an enquiry and proposal, like that of the awakened sinner, *wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil**? Alas! wert thou as great a prince as Solomon himself, and couldst thou indeed purchase such sacrifices as these, there would be no room to mention them. *Lebanon would not be sufficient to burn, nor all the beasts thereof for a burnt offering*†. Even under that dispensation, which admitted and required sacrifices in some cases, the blood of bulls and of goats, though it exempted the offender from farther temporal punishment, *could not take away sin*‡, nor prevail by any means to purge the conscience in the sight of God. And that soul that had done aught presumptuously was not allowed to bring any sin-offering, or trespass-offering at all, but was condemned to *die without mercy*‖. Now God and thine own conscience know, that thine offences have not been merely the errors of ignorance and inadvertency, but that thou hast sinned with an high hand in repeated aggravated instances,

* Mic. vi. 6, 7. † Isai. xl. 16. ‡ Heb. x. 4. ‖ Numb. xv. 30.

as thou hast acknowledged already.—Shouldst thou add, with the wretched sinner described above, *shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul!** What could the blood of a beloved child do in such a case, but dye thy crimes so much the deeper, and add a yet unknown horror to them? Thou hast offended a being of infinite majesty; and if that offence is to be expiated by blood, it must be by another kind of blood than that which flows in the veins of thy children, or in thine own.

§. 4. Wilt thou then suffer thyself, till thou hast made full satisfaction? But where shall that satisfaction be made?—Shall it be by any calamities to be endured in this mortal momentary life? Is the justice of God then esteemed so little a thing that the sorrows of a few days should suffice to answer its demands?—Or dost thou think of future sufferings, in the invisible world? If thou dost, that is not deliverance; and with regard to that I may venture to say, When thou hast made full satisfaction, thou wilt be released: when thou hast paid the utmost farthing of that debt, thy prison-doors shall be opened: in the mean time, thou must *make thy bed in hell*†: and, Oh unhappy man, wilt thou lie down there, with a secret hope, that the moment will come, when the rigour of divine justice will not be able to inflict any thing more than thou hast endured, and when thou mayest claim thy discharge as a matter of right? It would indeed be well for thee, if thou couldst carry down with thee such a hope, false and flattering as it is: but alas, thou wilt see things in so just a light, that to have no comfort but this, will be eternal despair. That one word of thy sentence, everlasting fire; that one declaration, *the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;* will be sufficient to strike such a thought into blank confusion, and to overwhelm thee with hopeless agony and horror.

§. 5. Or do you think, that your future reformation and diligence in duty for the time to come, will procure your discharge from this sentence? Take heed, sinner, what kind of obedience thou thinkest of offering to an holy God. That must be spotless and complete which his infinite sanctity can approve and accept, if he consider thee in thyself alone: there must be no inconstancy, no forgetfulness, no mixture of sin, attending it. And wilt thou, enfeebled as thou art, by so much original corruption, and so many sinful habits contracted by innumerable actual transgressions, undertake to render such an

* Mic. vi. 7. † Psal. cxxxix. 8.

obedience, and that for all the remainder of thy life? In vain wouldst thou attempt it, even for one day. New guilt would immediately plunge thee into new ruin, But if it did not; if from this moment to the very end of thy life all were as complete obedience as the law of God required from Adam in Paradise, would that be sufficient to cancel past guilt? Would it discharge an old debt, that thou hast not contracted a new one? Offer this to thy neighbour, and see if he will accept it for payment; and if he will not, wilt thou presume to offer it to thy God?

§. 6. But I will not multiply words on so plain a subject. While I speak thus, time is passing away, death presses on, and judgment is approaching. And what can save thee from these awful scenes, or what can protect thee in them? Can the world save thee, that vain delusive idol of thy wishes and pursuits, to which thou art sacrificing thine eternal hopes? Well dost thou know, that it will utterly forsake thee, when thou needest it most; and that not one of its enjoyments can be carried along with thee into the invisible state: no, not so much as a trifle to remember it by; if thou couldst desire to remember so inconstant, and so treacherous a friend, as the world has been.

§. 7. And when you are dead, or when you are dying, can your sinful companions save you? Is there any one of them, if he were ever so desirous of doing it, *that can give unto God a ransom for you**, to deliver you from going down to the grave, or from going down to hell? Alas, you will probably be so sensible of this, that when you lie on the border of the grave, you will be unwilling to see or to converse with those, that were once your favourite companions. They will afflict you, rather than relieve you, even then: how much less can they relieve you before the bar of God, when they are overwhelmed with their own condemnation?

§. 8. As for the powers of darkness, you are sure they will be far from any ability, or inclination to help you. Satan has been watching and labouring for your destruction, and he will triumph in it. But if there could be any thing of an amicable confederacy between you, what would that be, but an association in ruin? For the day of judgment for ungodly men, will also be the judgment of these rebellious spirits; and the fire into which thou, O sinner, must depart, is that which was *prepared for the devil and his angels*†.

§. 9. Will the celestial spirits then save thee? will they interpose their power, or their prayers, in thy favour? An in-

* Psal. xlix. 7. † Mat. xxv. 41.

terposition of power, when sentence is gone forth against thee, were an act of rebellion against heaven, which these holy and excellent creatures would abhor. And when the final pleasure of the judge is known, instead of interceding in vain for the wretched criminal, they would rather, with ardent zeal for the glory of their Lord, and cordial acquiescence in the determination of his wisdom and justice, prepare to execute it. Yea, difficult as it may at present be to conceive it, it is a certain truth, that the servants of Christ, who now most tenderly love you, and most affectionately seek your salvation; not excepting those, who are allied to you in the nearest bonds of nature, or of friendship; even they shall put their amen to it. Now, indeed, their bowels yearn over you, and their eyes pour out tears on your account: now they expostulate with you, and plead with God for you, if by any means, while yet there is hope, you may be *plucked as a fire-brand out of the burning**. But alas, their remonstrances, you will not regard: and as for their prayers, what should they ask for you? What but this, that you may see yourselves to be undone? and that, utterly despairing of any help from yourselves, or from any created power, you may lie before God in humility and brokenness of heart; that submitting yourselves to his righteous judgment, and in an utter renunciation of all self-dependance, and of all creature-dependance, you may lift up an humble look towards him, as almost from the depths of hell, if peradventure he may have compassion upon you, and may himself direct you to that only method of rescue, which, while things continue as in present circumstances they are, neither earth, nor hell, nor heaven can afford you.

The Lamentation of a Sinner, in this miserable Condition.

"OH doleful, uncomfortable, helpless state! O wretch that I am, to have reduced myself to it! Poor, empty, miserable, abandoned creature! Where is my pride, and the haughtiness of my heart! Where are my idol deities, *whom I have loved, and served, after whom I have walked, and whom I have sought*,† whilst I have been multiplying my transgressions against the majesty of heaven? Is there no heart to have compassion upon me? Is there no hand to save me? *Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me*‡, hath seized me! I feel it pressing me hard, and what shall I do? Perhaps they have pity upon me: but alas, how feeble a

* Amos iv. 11. † Jer. viii. 2. ‡ Job xix. 21.

compassion! Only if there be any where in the whole compass of nature any help, tell me where it may be found! O point it out; direct me towards it; or rather, confounded and astonished as my mind is, take me by the hand, and lead me to it!

"O ye ministers of the Lord, whose office it is to guide and comfort distressed souls, take pity upon me! I fear I am a pattern of many other helpless creatures, who have the like need of your assistance. Lay aside your other cares, to care for my soul; to care for this precious soul of mine, which lies as it were bleeding to death, (if that expression may be used,) while you perhaps hardly afford me a look; or, glancing an eye upon me, *pass over to the other side**. Yet, alas, in a case like mine, what can your interposition avail, if it be alone: *if the Lord do not help me, how can ye help me?*†

"*O God of the spirits of all flesh,*‡ I lift up mine eyes unto thee, and *cry unto thee, as out of the belly of hell.*‖ I cry unto thee, at least from the borders of it. Yet while I lie before thee in this infinite distress, I know, that thine almighty power and boundless grace can still find out a way for my recovery.

"Thou art he, whom I have most of all injured and affronted; and yet from thee alone must I now seek redress. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight;*¶ so that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest, though thou shouldst this moment adjudge me to eternal misery. And yet I find something that secretly draws me to thee, as if I might find rescue there, where I have deserved the most aggravated destruction. Blessed God, I *have destroyed myself, but in thee is my help,*** if there can be help at all.

"I know in the general, that *thy ways are not as our ways, nor thy thoughts as our thoughts; but are as high above them, as the heavens are above the earth.*†† *Have mercy therefore upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies!* ‡‡ Oh point out the path to the city of refuge! Oh *lead me* thyself *in the way everlasting!*‖‖ I know in the general, that thy gospel is the only remedy: Oh teach thy servants to administer it! Oh prepare mine heart to receive it! and suffer not, as in many instances, that malignity which has spread itself through all my nature, to turn that noble medicine into poison!"

* Luke x. 31. † 2 Kings vi. 27. ‡ Numb. xvi. 22 ‖ Jonah ii. 2.
¶ Psal. li. 4. ** Hos. xiii. 9. †† Isai. lv. 8, 9. ‡‡ Psal. li. 1.
‖‖ Psal. cxxxix. 24.

CHAP. VIII.

News of Salvation by Christ brought to the convinced and condemned Sinner.

The awful Things which have hitherto been said, intended not to grieve, but to help, §. 1. After some Reflection on the Pleasure with which a Minister of the Gospel may deliver the Message with which he is charged, §. 2. And some Reasons for the Repetition of what is in Speculation so generally known, §. 3. The Author proceeds briefly to declare the Substance of these glad Tidings; viz. That God, having in his infinite Compassion sent his Son to die for Sinners, is now reconcileable through him: §. 4—6. So that the most heinous Transgression shall be entirely pardoned to Believers, and they made completely and eternally happy, §. 7, 8. The Sinner's Reflection on this good News.

§. 1. MY dear reader! It is the great design of the gospel, and wherever it is cordially received, it is the glorious effect of it, to fill the heart with sentiments of love; to teach us to abhor all unnecessary rigour and severity, and to delight not in the grief, but in the happiness of our fellow creatures. I can hardly apprehend, how he can be a christian, who takes pleasure in the distress which appears even in a brute, much less in that of a human mind; and especially in such distress as the thoughts I have been proposing must give, if there be any due attention to their weight and energy. I have often felt a tender regret, while I have been representing these things; and I could have wished from mine heart, that it had not been necessary to have placed them in so severe and so painful a light. But now I am addressing myself to a part of my work, which I undertake with unutterable pleasure; and to that, which indeed I had in view, in all those awful things which I have already been laying before you. I have been shewing you, that, if you hitherto have lived in a state of impenitence and sin, you are condemned by God's righteous judgment, and have in yourself no spring of hope, and no possibility of deliverance, But I mean not to leave you under this sad apprehension, to lie down and die in despair, complaining of that cruel zeal, which has *tormented you before the time.**

§. 2. Arise, O thou dejected soul, that art prostrate in the dust before God, and trembling under the terror of his righteous sentence; for I am commissioned to tell thee, that though *thou hast destroyed thyself, in God is thine help.*† *I bring the good tidings of great joy,*‡ which delight mine own heart, while I

* Matt. viii. 29. † Hos. xiii. 9. ‡ Luke ii. 10.

proclaim them, and will I hope reach, and revive thine; even the tidings of salvation, by the blood and righteousness of the Redeemer. And I give it thee for thy greater security, in the words of a gracious and forgiving God, that *he is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and not imputing to them their trespasses.**

§. 3. This is the best news that ever was heard, the most important message which God ever sent to his creatures: and though I doubt not at all, but living, as you have done, in a christian country, you have heard it often, perhaps a thousand and a thousand times; I will with all simplicity and plainness, repeat it to you again, and repeat it as if you had never heard it before. If thou, O sinner, shouldst now for the first time feel it, then will it be as a new gospel unto thee, though so familiar to thine ear; nor shall it be grievous for me to speak what is so common, *since to you it is safe*† and necessary. They who are most deeply and intimately acquainted with it, instead of being cloyed and satiated, will hear it with distinguished pleasure; and as for those who have hitherto slighted it, I am sure they had need to hear it again. Nor is it absolutely impossible, that some one soul at least may read these lines, who hath never been clearly and fully instructed in this important doctrine, though his everlasting all depends on knowing and receiving it. I will therefore take care, that such a one shall not have it to plead at the bar of God, that though he lived in a christian country, he was never plainly and faithfully taught the doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ, *the way, the truth, and the life, by whom alone we come unto the Father.*‡

§. 4. I do therefore testify unto you this day, that the holy and gracious majesty of heaven and earth, foreseeing the fatal apostacy into which the whole human race would fall, did not determine to deal in a way of strict and rigorous severity with us, so as to consign us over to universal ruin and inevitable damnation; but on the contrary, he determined to enter into a treaty of peace and reconciliation, and to publish to all, whom the gospel should reach, the express offers of life and glory, in a certain method, which his infinite wisdom judged suitable to the purity of his nature, and the honour of his government. This method was indeed a most atsonishing one, which, familiar as it is to our thoughts and our tongues, I cannot recollect and mention without great amazement. He determined to send his own

* 2 Cor. v. 19. † Phil. iii. 1. ‡ John xiv. 6.

Son into the world, *the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,** partaker of his own divine perfections and honours, to be not merely a teacher of righteousness, and a messenger of grace, but also a sacrifice for the sins of men: and would consent to his saving them, on no other condition but this, that he should not only labour, but die in the cause.

§. 5. Accordingly, at such a period of time as infinite wisdom saw most convenient, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in human flesh; and after he had gone through incessant and long continued fatigues, and borne all the preceding injuries, which the ingratitude and malice of men could inflict, he voluntarily *submitted himself to death, even the death of the cross;*† and having been *delivered for our offences, was raised again for our justification*‡. After his resurrection, he continued long enough on earth, to give his followers most convincing evidences of it, and then *ascended into heaven in their sight;*‖ and sent down his spirit from thence upon his apostles, to enable them in the most persuasive and authoritative manner *to preach the gospel:*¶ and he has given it in charge to them, and to those who in every age succeed them in this part of their office, that it should *be published to every creature,*** that all who believe in it may be saved, by virtue of its abiding energy, and the immutable power and grace of its divine author, who is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*††

§. 6. This gospel do I therefore now preach, and proclaim unto thee, O reader, with the sincerest desire, that through divine grace, it may *this very day be salvation to thy soul!*‡‡ Know therefore, and consider it, whosoever thou art, that as surely as these words are now before thine eyes, so sure it is, that the incarnate Son of God was *made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men;*‖‖ his back torn with scourges, his head with thorns, his limbs stretched out as on a rack, and nailed to the accursed tree; and in this miserable condition he was hung by his hands and his feet, as an object of public infamy and contempt. Thus did he die, in the midst of all the taunts and insults of his cruel enemies, who thirsted for his blood; and, which was the saddest circumstance of all, in the midst of these agonies with which he closed the most innocent, perfect, and useful life that was ever spent on earth, he had not those supports of the divine presence, which sinful men have

* Heb. i. 3. † Phil. ii. 8. ‡ Rom. iv. 25. ‖ Acts i. 9—11.
¶ Luke xxiv. 40. ** Mark xvi. 15. †† Heb. xiii. 8. ‡‡ Luke xix. 9.
‖‖ 1 Cor. iv. 9.

often experienced, when they have been suffering for the testimony of their conscience. They have often burst out into transports of joy and songs of praise, while their executioners have been glutting their hellish malice, and more than savage barbarity, by making their torments artificially grievous; but the crucified Jesus cried out, in the distress of his spotless and holy soul, *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**

§. 7. Look upon our dear Redeemer; look up to this mournful, dreadful, yet in one view, delightful spectacle; and then ask thine own heart, Do I believe that Jesus suffered and died thus? And why did he suffer and die? Let me answer in God's own words, *he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, that by his stripes we might be healed: it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief, when he made his soul an offering for sin; for the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.*† So that I may address you in the words of the apostle, *be it known unto you therefore, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins;*‡ as it was his command, just after he rose from the dead, *that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem;*‖ the very place, where his blood had so lately been shed in such a cruel manner. I do therefore testify to you, in the words of another inspired writer, that *Christ was made sin*, that is a sin-offering, *for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;*¶ that is, that through the righteousness he has fulfilled, and the atonement he has made, we might be accepted by God as righteous, and be not only pardoned, but received into his favour. *To you is the word of this salvation sent;*** and to you, O reader, are the blessings of it even now offered by God, sincerely offered; so that, after all that I have said under the former heads, it is not your having broken the law of God, that shall prove your ruin, if you do not also reject his gospel. It is not all those legions of sins, which rise up in battle array against you, that shall be able to destroy you, if unbelief do not lead them on, and final impenitency do not bring up the rear. I know, that guilt is a timorous thing; I will therefore speak in the words of God himself, nor can any be more comfortable; *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;*†† *and he*

* Matt. xxvii. 46. † Isai. liii. 5, 6, 10. ‡ Acts xiii. 38. ‖ Luke xxiv. 47.
¶ 2 Cor. v. 21. ** Acts xiii. 26. †† John iii. 36.

shall never come into condemnation : there is therefore now no condemnation*, no kind or degree of it, *to them*, to any one of them, *who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit*†. You have indeed been a very great sinner, and your offences have truly been attended with most heinous aggravations ; nevertheless you may rejoice in the assurance, that *where sin hath abounded, there shall grace much more abound*‡ ; that *where sin hath reigned unto death*, where it has had its most unlimited sway, and most unresisted triumph, there *shall righteousness reign to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*‖. That righteousness, to which on believing on him thou wilt be intitled, shall not only break those chains, by which sin is (as it were) dragging thee at its chariot wheels with a furious pace to eternal ruin ; but it shall clothe thee with the robes of salvation, shall fix thee on a throne of glory, where thou shalt live and reign for ever among the princes of heaven ; shalt reign in immortal beauty and joy, without one remaining scar of divine displeasure upon thee ; without one single mark by which it could be known, that thou hast ever been obnoxious to wrath and a curse ; except it be an anthem of praise to *the Lamb that was slain, and has washed thee from thy sins in his own blood*¶.

§. 8. Nor is it necessary, in order to thy being released from guilt, and intitled to this high and complete felicity, that thou shouldst, before thou wilt venture to apply to Jesus, bring any good works of thine own to recommend thee to his acceptance. It is indeed true, that if thy faith be sincere, it will certainly produce them : but I have the authority of the word of God to tell thee, that if thou this day sincerely believest in the name of the Son of God, thou shalt this day be taken under his care, and be numbered among those of his sheep, to whom he hath graciously declared, that *he will give eternal life, and that they shall never perish***. Thou hast no need therefore to say, *Who shall go up into heaven, or who shall descend into the deep for me? For the word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thine heart*††.

With this joyful message I leave thee ; with this faithful saying, indeed *worthy of all acceptation*‡‡ ; with this gospel, O sinner, which is my life ; and which, if thou dost not reject it, will be thine too.

* John v. 24. † Rom. viii. 1. ‡ Rom. v. 20. ‖ Rom. v. 21.
¶ Rev. i. 5. ** John x. 28. †† Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. ‡‡ 1 Tim. i. 15.

The Sinner's Reflection on this good News.

OH my soul, how astonishing is the message which thou hast this day received! I have indeed often heard it before; and it is grown so comm n to me, that the surprise is not sensible. But reflect, O my soul, what it is thou hast heard; and say, whether the name of the Saviour, whose message it is, may not well be called *Wonderful Counsellor**, when he displays before thee such wonders of love, and proposes to thee such counsels of peace?"

"Blessed Jesus, is it indeed thus! Is it not the fiction of the human mind? Surely it is not! What human mind could have invented or conceived it? Is it a plain, a certain fact, that thou didst leave the magnificence and joy of the heavenly world, in compassion to such a wretch as I! O hadst thou, from that height of dignity and felicity, only looked down upon me for a moment, and sent some gracious word to me for my direction and comfort, even by the least of thy servants, justly might I have prostrated myself in grateful admiration, and have kissed the very footsteps of him *that published the salvation*†. But didst thou condescend to be thyself the messenger! What grace had that been, though thou hadst but once in person made the declaration, and immediately returned back to the throne, from whence divine compassion brought thee down! But this is not all the triumph of thine illustrious grace. It not only brought thee down to earth, but kept thee here in a frail and wretched tabernacle, for long successive years: and at length, it cost thee thy life, and stretched thee out as a malefactor upon the cross, after thou hadst borne insults and cruelty, which it may justly wound my heart so much as to think of. And thus thou hast atoned injured justice, and *redeemed me to God with thine own blood*‡.

"What shall I say? *Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief*‖! It seems to put faith to the stretch, to admit, what it indeed exceeds the utmost stretch of imagination to conceive. Blessed, for ever blessed be thy name, O thou father of mercies, that thou hast contrived the way! Eternal thanks to the Lamb that was slain, and to that kind providence that sent the word of this salvation to me! Oh let me not, for ten thousand worlds *receive the grace of God in vain*¶! O impress this gospel upon my soul, till its saving virtue be diffused over every faculty! Let it not only be heard, and acknowledged, and pro-

* Isai. ix. 6. † Isai. lii. 7. ‡ Rev. v. ix. ‖ Mark ix. 24. ¶ 2 Cor. vi. 1.

fessed, but felt! Make it *thy power to my eternal salvation**; and raise me to that humble tender gratitude, to that active unwearied zeal in thy service, which becomes one, *to whom so much is forgiven*†, and forgiven upon such terms as these!

"I feel a sudden glow in mine heart, while these tidings are sounding in mine ears: but Oh, let it not be a slight superficial transport; Oh let not this, which I would fain call my christian joy, be as that *foolish laughter*, with which I have been so madly inchanted, *like the crackling blaze of thorns under a pot*‡? O teach me to secure this mighty blessing, this glorious hope, in the method which thou hast appointed! and preserve me from mistaking the joy of nature, while it catches a glimpse of its rescue from destruction, for that consent of grace, which embraces and ensures the deliverance!"

CHAP. IX.

A more particular Account of the Way, by which this Salvation is to be obtained.

An Enquiry into the Way of Salvation by Christ being supposed, §. 1. The Sinner is in general directed to Repentance and Faith, §. 2. And urged to give up all Self-dependance, §. 3. And to seek Salvation by free Grace, §. 4. A Summary of more particular Directions is proposed, §. 5. (1.) That the Sinner should apply to Christ, §. 6. With a deep Abhorrence of his former Sins, §. 7. And a firm resolution of forsaking them, §. 8. (2.) That he solemnly commit his Soul into the Hands of Christ, the great vital Act of Faith, §. 9. Which is exemplified at large, §. 10. (3.) That he make it in Fact the governing Care of his future Life to obey and imitate Christ, §. 11. This is the only Method of obtaining Gospel Salvation, §. 12. The Sinner deliberating on the Expediency of accepting it.

§. 1. I NOW consider you, my dear reader, as coming to me with the enquiry, which the Jews once addressed to our Lord; *what shall we do, that we may work the works of God*‖! What method shall I take to secure that redemption and salvation, which I am told Christ has procured for his people?" I would answer it as seriously, and carefully as possible; as one that knows of what importance it is to you to be rightly informed; and that knows also, how strictly he is to answer to God, for the sincerity and care with which the reply is made.

* Rom. i. 16. † Luke vii. 47. ‡ Eccles. vii. 6. ‖ John vi. 28.

May I be enabled to *speak as his oracle**, that is, in such a manner, as faithfully to echo back what the sacred oracles teach!

§. 2. And here, that I may be sure to follow the safest guides, and the fairest examples, I must preach salvation to you, in the way of *repentance towards God, and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*†: that good old doctrine, which the apostles preached, and which no man can pretend to change, but at the peril of his own soul, and theirs who attend to him.

§. 3. I suppose, that you are, by this time, convinced of your guilt and condemnation, and of your own inability to recover yourself. Let me nevertheless urge you to feel that conviction, yet more deeply, and to impress it with yet greater weight upon your soul; that you have undone yourself, and that *in yourself is not your help found*‡. Be persuaded therefore, expressly, and solemnly, and sincerely, to give up all self-dependence; which if you do not guard against, will be ready to return secretly, before it is observed, and will lead you to attempt building up what you have just been destroying.

§. 4. Be assured, that if ever you are saved, you must ascribe that salvation entirely to the free grace of God. If guilty and miserable as you are, you are not only accepted, but crowned, you must *lay down your crown* with all humble acknowledgment *before the throne*‖. *No flesh must glory in his presence; but he that glorieth, must glory in the Lord: for of him are we in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*¶. And you must be sensible, you are in such a state, as, having none of these in yourself, to need them in another. You must therefore be sensible, that you are ignorant and guilty, polluted and enslaved; or, as our Lord expresses it, with regard to some who were under a christian profession, that as a sinner, you are *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked***.

§. 5. If these views be deeply impressed upon your mind, you will be prepared to receive what I am now to say. Hear therefore in a few words your duty, your remedy, and your safety; which consists in this, "that you must apply to Christ, with a deep abhorrence of your former sins, and a firm resolution of forsaking them; forming that resolution in the strength of his grace, and fixing your dependance on him, for your ac-

* 1 Pet. iv. 11. † Acts xx. 21. ‡ Hos. xiii. 9.
‖ Rev. iv. 10. ¶ 1 Cor. i. 29, 30, 31. ** Rev. iii. 17.

ceptance with God, even while you are purposing to do your very best, and when you have actually done the best you ever will do in consequence of that purpose.

§. 6. The first and most important advice that I can give you in your present circumstances, is, that you look to Christ and apply yourself to him. And here, *say not in your heart, who shall ascend into heaven, to bring him down to me* ?* or who shall raise me up thither, to present me before him? The blessed Jesus, *by whom all things consist*†, by whom the whole system of them is supported, "forgotten as he is by most that bear his name," *is not far from any of us*‡: nor could he have promised to have been *wherever two or three are met together in his name*‖, but in consequence of those truly divine perfections, by which he is every where present. Would you therefore, O sinner, desire to be saved? Go to the Saviour. Would you desire to be delivered? Look to that great deliverer: and though you should be so overwhelmed with guilt and shame, and fear, and horror, that you should be incapable of speaking to him, fall down in this speechless confusion at his feet; and *behold him as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world*¶.

§. 7. Behold him therefore with an attentive eye, and say, whether the sight does not touch, and even melt thy very heart! Dost thou not feel, what a foolish, and what a wretched creature thou hast been; that for the sake of such low and sordid gratifications and interests, as those which thou hast been pursuing, thou shouldst thus *kill the Prince of Life** ?* Behold the deep wounds which he bore for thee, *look on him whom thou hast pierced, and surely thou must mourn*††, unless thine heart be hardened into stone. Which of thy past sins canst thou reflect upon, and say, "For this it was worth my while thus to have injured my Saviour, and to have exposed the Son of God to such sufferings?" and what future temptations can arise so considerable, that thou shouldst say, *for the sake of this, I will crucify my Lord again*‡‡ *?* Sinner, thou must repent; thou must repent of every sin; and must forsake it: but if thou doest it to any purpose, I well know it must be at the foot of the cross. Thou must sacrifice every lust, even the dearest; though it should be like a *right hand*, or *a right eye*‖‖ and therefore, that thou mayest, if possible, be animated to it, I have led thee to that altar, on which *Christ himself was sacri-*

* Rom. x. 6. † Col. i. 17. ‡ Acts xvii. 27.
‖ Mat. xviii. 20. ¶ John i. 29. ** Acts iii. 15.
†† Zech. xii 10. ‡‡ Heb. vi. 6. ‖‖ Mat. v. 29, 30.

*ficed for thee, an offering of a sweet smelling savour**. Thou must *yield up thyself to God, as one alive from the dead*†. and therefore I have shewed thee at what a price he purchased thee; for *thou wast not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God, that Lamb without blemish and without spot*‡. And now I would ask thee, as before the Lord, What does thine own heart say to it? Art thou grieved for thy former offences? Art thou willing to forsake thy sins? Art thou willing to become the cheerful, thankful servant of him, who hath purchased thee with his own blood?

§. 8. I will suppose such a purpose as this rising in thine heart. How determinate it is, and how effectual it may be, I know not: what different views may arise hereafter, or how soon the present may wear off. But this I assuredly know, that thou wilt never see reason to change these views: for however thou mayest alter, the Lord *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*‖. And the reasons that now recommend repentance and faith, as fit and necessary, will continue invariable, as long as the perfections of the blessed God are the same, and as long as his Son continues the same.

§. 9. But while you have these views and these purposes, I must remind you, that this is not all which is necessary to your salvation. You must not only purpose, but as God gives opportunity, you must act, as those who are convinced of the evil of sin, and of the necessity and excellence of holiness. And that you may be enabled to do so in other instances, you must in the first place, and as the first great work of God, (as our Lord himself calls it,) *believe in him whom God hath sent*¶: you must confide in him; must commit your soul into the hands of Christ, to be saved by him in his own appointed method of salvation. This is the great act of saving faith; and I pray God, that you may experimentally know what it means; so as to be able to say with the apostle Paul, in the near views of death itself, *I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him until that day***; that great decisive day, which if we are christians, we have always in view. To this I would urge you; and Oh that I could be so happy as to engage you to it, while I am illustrating it in this, and the following addresses! Be assured,

* Eph. v. 2. † Rom. vi. 13. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.
‖ Heb. xiii. 8. ¶ John vi. 29. ** 2 Tim. i. 12.

you must not apply yourselves immediately to God, as absolutely or in himself considered, in the neglect of a Mediator. It will neither be acceptable to him, nor safe for you, to rush into his presence, without any regard to his own Son, whom he hath appointed to introduce sinners to him. And if you come otherwise, you come as one who is not a sinner. The very manner of presenting the address will be interpreted as a denial of that guilt, with which he knows you are chargeable: and therefore he will not admit you, nor so much as look upon you. And accordingly, our Lord, knowing how much every man living was concerned in this, says in the most universal terms, *no man cometh unto the Father but by me**.

§. 10. Apply therefore to this glorious Redeemer, amiable (as he will appear to every believing eye) in the blood which he shed upon the cross, and in the wounds which he received there. Go to him, O sinner, this day, this moment, with all thy sins about thee. Go just as thou art; for if thou wilt never apply to him, till thou art first righteous and holy, thou wilt never be righteous and holy at all; nor canst be so on this supposition, unless there were some way of being so without him; and then, there would be no occasion for applying to him for righteousness and holiness. It were indeed as if it should be said, that a sick man should defer his application to a physician, till his health is recovered. Let me therefore repeat it without offence, Go to him just as thou art, and say, (Oh that thou mayest this moment be enabled to say it from thy very soul!) "Blessed Jesus, I am surely one of the most sinful, and one of the most miserable creatures, that ever fell prostrate before thee: nevertheless I come, because I have heard that thou didst once say, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*†. I come, because I have heard, thou didst graciously say, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out*‡. O thou Prince of Peace, O thou King of Glory, I am a condemned miserable sinner, I have ruined my own soul, and am condemned for ever, if thou dost not help me and save me. I have broken thy Father's law, and thine, for thou art *one with him*‖. I have deserved condemnation and wrath; and I am, even at this very moment, under a sentence of everlasting destruction: a destruction, which will be aggravated by all the contempt which I have cast upon thee, O thou bleeding Lamb of God: for I cannot, and I will not dissemble it before thee, that I have wronged thee,

* John xiv. 6. † Mat. xi. 28. ‡ John vi. 37. ‖ John x. 30.

most basely and ungratefully wronged thee, under the character of a Saviour, as well as of a Lord. But now I am willing to submit to thee; and I have brought my poor trembling soul, to lodge it in thine hands, if thou wilt condescend to receive it; and if thou dost not, it must perish. O Lord, I lie at thy feet! stretch out *thy golden sceptre that I may live** ! Yea, *if it please the King, let the life of my soul be given me at my petition†!* I have no treasure, wherewith to purchase it; I have no equivalent to give thee for it: but if that compassionate heart of thine can find a pleasure in saving one of the most distressed creatures under heaven, that pleasure thou mayest here find. O Lord, I have foolishly attempted to be mine own saviour; but it will not do. I am sensible the attempt is vain; and therefore I give it over, and look unto thee. On thee blessed Jesus, who art sure and stedfast, do I desire to fix my anchor. On thee as the only sure foundation, would I build my eternal hopes. To thy teaching, O thou unerring Prophet of the Lord, would I submit: be thy doctrines ever so mysterious, it is enough for me that thou thyself hast said it. To thine atonement, obedience, and intercession, O thou holy and ever acceptable High-Priest, would I trust. And to thy government, O thou exalted Sovereign, would I yield a willing, delightful subjection: in token of reverence and love, *I kiss the Son‡*; I kiss the ground before his feet. I admit thee, O my Saviour, and welcome thee with unutterable joy, to the throne in my heart. Ascend it, and reign there for ever! Subdue mine enemies, O Lord, for they are thine; and make me thy faithful, and zealous servant; faithful to death, and zealous to eternity."

§. 11. Such as this must be the language of your very heart before the Lord. But then remember, that in consequence thereof it must be the language of your life too. The unmeaning words of the lips would be a vain mockery. The most affectionate transport of the passions, should it be transient and ineffectual, would be but like a blaze of straw, presented instead of incense at his altar. With such humility, with such love, with such cordial self-dedication and submission of soul, must thou often prostrate thyself, in the presence of Christ; and then thou must go away, and keep him in thy view; must go away, and live unto God through him, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, and behaving thyself *soberly, righteously, and godly in this*

* Esth. iv. 11. † Esth. vii. 3. ‡ Psal. ii. 12.

vain insnaring *world**. You must make it your care to shew your love by obedience; by forming yourself as much as possible, according to the temper and manner of Jesus, in whom you believe. You must make it the great point of your ambition, (and a nobler view you cannot entertain,) to be a living image of Christ; that so far as circumstances will allow, even those who have heard and read but little of him, may, by observing you, in some measure see and know what kind of a life that of the blessed Jesus was. And this must be your constant care, your prevailing character, as long as you live. You must follow him, whithersoever he leads you; must follow, with a *cross* on your shoulder, when he commands you to *take it up*†; and so must *be faithful even unto death*, expecting *the crown of life*‡.

§. 12. This, so far as I have been able to learn from the word of God, is the way to safety and glory; the surest, the only way you can take. 'Tis the way which every faithful minister of Christ has trod, and is treading; and the way, to which, as he tenders the salvation of his own soul, he must direct others. We cannot, we would not alter it, in favour of ourselves, or of our dearest friends. It is the way in which alone, so far as we can judge, it becomes the blessed God to save his apostate creatures. And therefore, reader, I beseech and intreat you, seriously to consider it; and let your own conscience answer, as in the presence of God, whether you are willing to acquiesce in it, or not. But know, that to reject it, is thine eternal death. For as *there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved*‖, but this of Jesus of Nazareth, so there is no other method but this, in which Jesus himself will save us.

The Sinner deliberating on the Expediency of falling in with this Method of Salvation.

CONSIDER, O my soul, what answer wilt thou return to such proposals as these? Surely if I were to speak the first dictate of this corrupt and degenerate heart, it would be, *this is a hard saying and who can hear it*¶? To be thus humbled thus mortified, thus subjected! To take such a yoke upon me, and to carry it as long as I live! To give up every darling lust, though dear to me as a right eye, and seemingly necessary as a right hand! To submit not only my life, but my heart, to the

* Tit. ii. 12. † Matt. xvi. 24. ‡ Rev. ii. 10. ‖ Acts iv. 12. ¶ John vi. 60.

command and discipline of another! To have a master there, and such a master, as will controul many of its favourite affections, and direct them quite into another channel! A master, who himself represents his commands, by taking up the cross and following him! To adhere to the strictest rules of godliness and sobriety, of righteousness and truth; not departing from them, in any allowed instance, great or small, upon any temptation, for any advantage, to escape any inconvenience and evil, no, not even for the preservation of life itself; but, upon a proper call of providence, to act as if I *hated even my own life* !* Lord, it is hard to flesh and blood: and yet I perceive and feel, there is one demand yet harder than this.

With all these precautions, with all these mortifications, the pride of my nature would find some inward resource of pleasure, might I but secretly think that I had been my own saviour; that my own wisdom, and my own resolution, had broken the bands and chains of the enemy; and that I had drawn out of my own treasures, the price with which my redemption was purchased. But must I lie down before another, as guilty and condemned, as weak and helpless; and must the obligation be multiplied, and must a mediator have his share too? Must I go to the cross for my salvation, and seek my glory from the infamy of that? Must I be stripped of every pleasing pretence to righteousness, and stand in this respect upon a level with the vilest of men? stand at the bar amongst the greatest criminals, pleading guilty with them, and seeking deliverance by that very act of grace, whereby they have obtained it?

"I dare not deliberately say, this method is unreasonable. My conscience testifies, that I have sinned and cannot be justified before God, as an innocent and obedient creature. My conscience tells me, that all these humbling circumstances are fit: that it is fit, a convicted criminal should be brought upon his knees: that a captive rebel should give up the weapons of his rebellion, and bow before his sovereign, if he expect his life. Yea, my reason, as well as my conscience, tells me, that it is fit and necessary, that if I am saved at all, I should be saved from the power and love of sin, as well as from the condemnation of it; and that if sovereign mercy gives me a new life, after having deserved eternal death, it is most fit, I should *yield myself to God, as alive from the dead*†. But, *O wretched man that I am, I feel a law in my members that wars against*

* Luke xiv. 26. † Rom. vi. 13.

*the law of my mind**, and opposes the conviction of my reason and conscience. Who shall deliver me from this bondage? Who shall make me willing to do that, which I know in my soul to be most expedient? O Lord, subdue my heart, and let it not be drawn so strongly one way, while the nobler powers of my mind would direct it another! Conquer every licentious principle within, that it may be my joy to be so wisely governed, and restrained! Especially, subdue my pride, that lordly corruption, which so ill suits an impoverished and a condemned creature; that thy way of salvation be made amiable to me, in proportion to the degree in which it is humbling! I feel a disposition to linger in Sodom, but *O be merciful to me, and pull me out of it*†, before the storms of thy flaming vengeance fall, and there be no more escaping!"

CHAP. X.

The Sinner seriously urged and intreated to accept of Salvation in this Way.

Since many who have been impressed with these Things suffer the Impression to wear off in vain, §. 1. Strongly as the Case speaks for itself, Sinners are to be intreated to accept this Salvation, §. 2. Accordingly the Reader is intreated, (1.) By the Majesty and Mercy of God: §. 3. (2.) By the dying Love of our Lord Jesus Christ: §. 4. (3.) By the Regard due to Fellow Creatures: §. 5. (4.) By the Worth of his own immortal Soul, §. 6. The Matter is solemnly left with the Reader as before God, §. 7. The Sinner yielding to these Intreaties, and declaring his Acceptance of Salvation by Christ.

§. 1. THUS far have I often known convictions and impressions to arise, (if I might judge by the strongest appearances) which after all have worn off again. Some unhappy circumstance of external temptation, ever joined by the inward reluctance of an unsanctified heart to this holy and humbling scheme of redemption, has been the ruin of multitudes. And *through the deceitfulness of sin*, they have *been hardened*‡, till they seem to have been *utterly destroyed, and that without remedy* ‖. And therefore, O thou immortal creature, who art now reading these lines, I beseech thee, that while affairs are in this critical situation, while there are these balancings of mind, between accepting and rejecting that glorious gospel, which, in the integrity of my heart, I have now been laying

* Rom. vii. 23, 24. † Gen. xix. 16. ‡ Heb. iii. 13. ‖ Prov. xxix. 1.

before you, you would once more give me an attentive audience, while I plead in God's behalf, (shall I say?) or rather in your own: while *as an ambassador for Christ, and as though God did beseech you by me, I pray you in Christ's stead,* that you would *be reconciled to God**; and would not after these awakenings and these enquiries, by a madness which it will surely be the doleful business of a miserable eternity to lament, reject this compassionate council of God towards you.

§. 2. One would indeed imagine, there should be no need of importunity here. One would conclude, that as soon as perishing sinners are told, that an offended God is ready to be reconciled; that he offers them a full pardon for all their aggravated sins; yea, that he is willing to adopt them into his family now, that he may at length admit them to his heavenly presence; all should with the utmost readiness and pleasure embrace so kind a message, and fall at his feet in speechless transports of astonishment, gratitude, and joy. But alas, we find it much otherwise. We see multitudes quite unmoved, and the impressions which are made on many more are feeble and transient. Lest it should be thus with you, O reader, let me urge the message with which I have the honour to be charged: let me intreat you to be reconciled to God, and to accept of pardon and salvation in the way in which it is so freely offered to you.

§. 3. I intreat you, by the majesty of that God, in whose name I come; whose voice fills all heaven with reverence and obedience. He speaks not in vain, to legions of angels; but if there could be any contention among those blessed spirits, it would be who should be first to execute his commands. O let him not speak in vain to a wretched mortal! I intreat you, by the terrors of his wrath, who could speak to you in thunder; who could by one single act of his will, cut off this precarious life of yours, and send you down to hell. I beseech you, by his mercies, by his tender mercies; by the bowels of his compassion, which still yearn over you, as those of a parent over a dear son, over a tender child, whom notwithstanding his former ungrateful rebellion, *he earnestly remembers still.*† I beseech and intreat you, by all this paternal goodness, that you do not (as it were) compel him to lose the character of the gentle parent, in that of the righteous Judge; so that (as he threatens with regard to those whom he had just called his sons and his daughters;) *a fire shall be kindled in his anger, which shall burn unto the lowest hell.*‡

* 2 Cor. v. 20. † Jer. xxxi. 20. ‡ Deut. xxxii. 19, 22.

§. 4. I beseech you farther, "by the name and love of our dying Saviour." I beseech you, by all the condescension of his incarnation; by that poverty to which he voluntarily submitted, *that you might be enriched** with eternal treasures; by all the gracious invitations which he gave, which still sound in his word, and still coming (as it were) warm from his heart, are *sweeter than honey or the honey-comb.*† I beseech you, by all his glorious works of power and of wonder, which were also works of love. I beseech you by the memory of the most benevolent person, and the most generous friend. I beseech you, by the memory of what he suffered, as well as of what he said and did; by the agony which he endured in the garden, when his body was covered *with a dew of blood.*‡ I beseech you by all that tender distress which he felt, when his dearest friends *forsook him and fled*§, and his blood-thirsty enemies dragged him away, like the meanest of slaves, and like the vilest of criminals. I beseech you by the blows and bruises, by the stripes and lashes, which this injured sovereign endured while in their rebellious hands; by *the shame of spitting, from which he hid not that kind and venerable countenance.* ‖ I beseech you, by the purple robe, the sceptre of reed, and the crown of thorns, which this king of glory wore, that he *might set us among the princes of heaven.*¶ I beseech you, by the heavy burden of the cross, under which he panted, and toiled, and fainted, in the painful way to *Golgotha*,** that he might free us from the burden of our sins. I beseech you, by the remembrance of those rude nails, that tore the veins and arteries, the nerves and tendons of those sacred hands and feet; and by that invincible, that triumphant goodness, which, while the iron pierced his flesh, engaged him to cry out, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*†† I beseech you, by that unutterable anguish which he bore, when lifted up upon the cross, and extended there as on a rack, for six painful hours, that you open your heart to those attractive influences which have drawn to him thousands and ten thousands.‡‡ I beseech you by all that insult and derision, which the *Lord of glory* §§ bore there; by that parching thirst which could hardly obtain the relief of *vinegar*; ‖‖ by that doleful cry, so astonishing in the mouth of the only begotten of the Father, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*¶¶ I beseech you, by that grace that subdued

* 2 Cor. viii. 9. † Psal. xix. 10. ‡ Luke xxii. 44. § Matt. xxvi 56.
‖ Isai. l. 6. ¶ Psal. cxiii. 8. ** John xix. 17. †† Luke xxiii. 34.
‡‡ John xii. 32. §§ Mat. xxvii. 39—44. ‖‖ John xix. 28, 29. ¶¶ Mat. xxvii. 46.

and pardoned *a dying malefactor*;* by that compassion for sinners, by that compassion for you, which wrought in his heart, long as its vital motion continued, and which ended not when he bowed his head, saying, *It is finished, and gave up the ghost*†. I beseech you, by the triumphs of that resurrection by which he was *declared to be the Son of God with power, by the Spirit of holiness*‡ which wrought to accomplish it; by that gracious tenderness which attempered all those triumphs, when he said to her out of whom he had cast seven devils, concerning his disciples, who had treated him so basely, *go, tell my brethren, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God*;§ I beseech you by that condescension, with which he said to Thomas when his unbelief had made such an unreasonable demand, *reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thine hand and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless but believing*.‖ I beseech you, by that generous and faithful care of his people, which he carried up with him to the regions of glory, and which engaged him to send down his spirit, in that rich profusion of miraculous gifts, to spread the progress of his saving word.¶ I beseech you by that voice of sympathy and power, with which he said to Saul, while injuring his church, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*** by that generous goodness, which spared that prostrate enemy, when he lay trembling at his feet, and raised him to so high a dignity, as to be *not inferior to the very chiefest apostles*.†† I beseech you by the memory of all that Christ hath already done, by the expectation of all he will farther do for his people. I beseech you, at once, by the sceptre of his grace, and by the sword of his justice, with which all his incorrigible enemies shall be *slain before him*,‡‡ that you do not trifle away these precious moments, while his Spirit is thus breathing upon you; that you do not lose an opportunity which may never return, and on the improvement of which your eternity depends.

§. 5. I beseech you, "by all the bowels of compassion which you owe to the faithful ministers of Christ;" who are studying and labouring, preaching and praying, wearing out their time, exhausting their strength, and very probably, shortening their lives, for the salvation of your soul, and of souls like

* Luke xxiii. 42, 43. † John xix. 30. ‡ Rom. i. 4. § John xx. 17.
‖ John xx. 27. ¶ Acts ii. 33. ** Acts ix. 4. †† 2 Cor. xii. 11.
‡‡ Luke xix. 27.

yours. I beseech you, by the affection, with which all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, long to see you brought back to him. I beseech you by the friendship of the living, and by the memory of the dead; by the ruin of those who have trifled away their days, and are perished in their sins, and by the happiness of those who have embraced the gospel, and are saved by it. I beseech you, by the great expectation of that important day when *the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven*;* by the terrors of a dissolving world;† by *the sound of the arch-angel's trumpet*;‡ and of that infinitely more awful sentence, *Come, ye blessed, and depart, ye cursed,* ‖ with which that awful solemnity shall close.

§. 6. I beseech you, finally, "by your own precious and immortal soul;" by the sure prospect of a dying bed, or of a sudden surprise into the invisible state: and as you would feel one spark of comfort in your departing spirit, when your flesh and your heart are failing. I beseech you by your own personal appearance before the tribunal of Christ, (for a personal appearance it must be, even to them who now sit on thrones of their own;) by all the transports of the blessed, and by all the agonies of the damned, the one or the other of which must be your everlasting portion. I affectionately intreat and beseech you, in the strength of all these united considerations, as you will answer it to me, who may in that day be summoned to testify against you; and, which is unspeakably more, as you will answer it to your own conscience, as you will answer it to the eternal Judge, that you dismiss not these thoughts, these meditations, and these cares, till you have brought matters to a happy issue; till you have made a resolute choice of Christ, and his appointed way of salvation, and till you have solemnly devoted yourself to God in the bonds of an everlasting covenant.

§. 7. And thus I leave the matter before you, and before the Lord. I have told you my errand; I have discharged my embassy. Stronger arguments I cannot use; more endearing and more awful considerations I cannot suggest. Chuse therefore, whether you will go out (as it were) clothed in sackcloth, to cast yourself at the feet of him who now sends you these equitable and gracious terms of peace and pardon; or whether you will hold it out, till he appears sword in hand, to reckon with you for your treasons and your crimes, and for this neglected embassy among the rest of them. Fain would I hope the best; nor can I believe, that this labour of love shall be so entirely

* 2 Thess. i. † 2 Pet. iii. 10. ‡ 1 Thess. iv. 16. ‖ Mat. xxvi. 34, 41.

unsuccessful, that not one soul shall be brought to the foot of Christ in cordial submission and humble faith. *Take with you therefore words, and turn unto the Lord;* * and oh that those which follow might, in effect, at least, be the genuine language of every one that reads them!

The Sinner yielding to those Intreaties, and declaring his Acceptance of Salvation by Christ.

"BLESSED Lord, it is enough! It is too much! Surely there needs not this variety of argument, this importunity of persuasion, to court me to be happy, to prevail upon me to accept of pardon, of life, of eternal glory. Compassionate Saviour, my soul is subdued; so that I trust, the language of thy grief is become that of my penitence, and I may say, *my heart is melted like wax in the midst of my bowels.*†

"O gracious Redeemer! I have already neglected thee too long. I have too often injured thee; have crucified thee afresh by my guilt and impenitence, as if I had taken pleasure in *putting thee to an open shame.*‡ But my heart now bows itself before thee, in humble unfeigned submission. I desire to make no terms with thee but these,—that I may be entirely thine. I cheerfully present thee with a blank, intreating thee, that thou wilt do me the honour to signify upon it, what is thy pleasure. Teach me, O Lord, what thou wouldst have me to do! For I desire to learn the lesson, and to learn it that I may practise it. If it be more than my feeble powers can answer, thou wilt, I hope, give me more strength; and in that strength I will serve thee. O receive a soul, which thou hast made willing to be thine.

"No more, O blessed Jesus, no more is it necessary to beseech and intreat me. Permit me rather to address myself to thee, with all the importunity of a perishing sinner, that, at length, sees and knows, *there is salvation in no other*§. Permit me now, Lord, to come and throw myself at thy feet, like a helpless outcast, that has no shelter but in thy generous compassion! like one pursued by the avenger of blood, and seeking earnestly an admittance *into the city of refuge.*‖

"*I wait for the Lord; my soul doth wait; and in thy word do I hope,*¶ that thou wilt *receive me graciously.*** My soul confides in thy goodness, and adores it. I adore the pa-

* Hos xiv. 2. † Psal. xxii. 14. ‡ Heb. vi. 6. § Acts iv. 12.
‖ Josh. xx. 2, 3. ¶ Psal. cxxxv. 5. ** Hos. xiv. 2.

tience, which has borne with me so long; and the grace that now makes me heartily willing to be thine; to be thine on thine own terms, thine on any terms. Oh secure this treacherous heart to thyself! Oh unite me to thee in such inseparable bonds, that none of the allurements of flesh and blood, none of the vanities of an insnaring world, none of the solicitations of sinful companions, may draw me back from thee, and plunge me into new guilt and ruin! *Be surety, O Lord, for thy servant for good**; that I may still keep my hold on thee, and so on eternal life; till at length I know more fully, by joyful and everlasting experience, how complete a Saviour thou art; Amen."

CHAP. XI.

A solemn Address to those who will not be persuaded to fall in with the Design of the Gospel.

Universal Success not to be expected: §. 1. Yet, as unwilling absolutely to give up any, the Author addresses, (1.) To those who doubt of the Truth of Christianity, urging an Enquiry into its Evidences, and directing to proper Methods for that Purpose, §. 2—4. (2.) To those who determine to give it up without farther Examination, §. 5. And presume to set themselves to oppose it, §. 6. (3.) To those who speculatively assent to Christianity as true, and yet will sit down without any practical Regard to its most important and acknowledged Truths. Such are dismissed with a Representation of the Absurdity of their Conduct on their own Principles; §. 7, 8. With a solemn Warning of its fatal Consequences; §. 9, 10. And a compassionate Prayer, (introduced §. 11.) which concludes the Chapter, and this Part of the Work.

§. 1. I WOULD humbly hope, that the preceding chapters will be the means of awakening some stupid and insensible sinners; the means of convincing them of their need of gospel-salvation, and of engaging some cordially to accept it. Yet, I cannot flatter myself so far, as to hope this should be the case with regard to all, into whose hands this book shall come. What am I, alas, *better than my fathers*†, or better than my brethren, who have in all ages been repeating their complaint, with regard to multitudes, that they *have stretched out their hands all day long to a disobedient and gainsaying people* ‡? Many such may, perhaps, be found, in the number of my readers: many,

* Psal cxix. 122. † 1 Kings xix. 4. ‡ Rom. x. 21.

on whom neither considerations of terror, nor of love, will make any deep and lasting impression: many, who as our Lord learnt by experience to express it, *when we pipe to them, will not dance; and, when we mourn unto them, will not lament**. I can say no more to persuade them, if they make light of what I have already said. Here therefore we must part; in this chapter I must take my leave of them; and, Oh that I could do it in such a manner, as to fix at parting, some conviction upon their hearts; that though I seem to leave them for a little while, and send them back to review again the former chapters, as those in which alone they have any present concern, they might soon, as it were, overtake me again, and find a suitableness in the remaining part of this discourse, which at present they cannot possibly find. Unhappy creatures! I quit you as a physician quits a patient whom he loves, and is just about to give over as incurable: he returns again and again, and re-examines the several symptoms, to observe whether there be not some one of them more favourable than the rest, which may encourage a renewed application.

§. 2. So would I once more return to you. You do not find in yourself any disposition to embrace the gospel, to apply yourself to Christ, to give yourself up to the service of God, and to make religion the business of your life. But if I cannot prevail upon you to do this, let me engage you at least, to answer me, or rather to answer your own conscience, "Why you will not do it?" Is it owing to any secret disbelief of the great principles of religion? If it be, the case is different from what I have yet considered, and the cure must be different. This is not a place to combat with the scruples of infidelity. Nevertheless I would desire you seriously to inquire, "how far those scruples extend." Do they affect only some particular doctrines of the gospel, on which my argument hath turned; or do they affect the whole christian revelation? Or do they reach yet further, and extend themselves to natural religion, as well as revealed, so that it should be a doubt with you, whether there be any God, and providence, and future state, or not? As these cases are all different, so it will be of great importance to distinguish the one from the other; that you may know on what principles to build as certain, in the examinations of those concerning which you are yet in doubt. But whatever these doubts are, I would farther ask you, "how long have they continued, and what method have you taken to get them resolved?" Do

* Mat. xi. 17.

you imagine, that in matters of such moment, it will be an allowable case for you to trifle on, neglecting to enquire into the evidence of these things, and then plead your not being satisfied in that evidence as an excuse for not acting according to them? Must not the principles of common sense assure you, that if these things be true, (as when you talk of doubting about them, you acknowledge it, at least, possible they may,) they are of infinitely greater importance than any of the affairs of life, whether of business or pleasure, for the sake of which you neglect them? Why then do you continue indolent and unconcerned, from week to week, and from month to month, which probably conscience tells you is the case?

§. 3. Do you ask, "what method you should take to be resolved!" It is no hard question. Open your eyes: set yourself to think: let conscience speak; and verily do I believe, that if it be not seared in an uncommon degree, you will find shrewd forebodings of the certainty both of natural and revealed religion, and of the absolute necessity of repentance, faith and holiness, to a life of future felicity. If you are a person of any learning, you cannot but know, by what writers, and in what treatises, these great truths are defended. And if you are not, you may find, in almost every town and neighbourhood, persons capable of informing you in the main evidences of christianity, and of answering such scruples against it as unlearned minds may have met with. Set yourself then in the name of God, immediately to consider the matter. If you study at all, bend your studies close this way; and trifle not with mathematics, or poetry, or history, or law, or physic, (which are all comparatively light as a feather,) while you neglect this. Study the argument, as for your life; for much more than life depends on it. See how far you are satisfied, and why that satisfaction reaches no farther. Compare evidences on both sides. And above all, consider the design and tendency of the New Testament. See to what it will lead you, and all them that cordially obey it; and then say, whether it be not good. And consider, how natural its truth is connected with its goodness. Trace the character and sentiments of its authors, whose living image (if I may be allowed the expression,) is still preserved in their writings. And then, ask your own heart, can you think this was a forgery, an impious cruel forgery? For such it must have been, if it were a forgery at all; a scheme to mock God, and to ruin men, even the best of men, such as reverenced conscience, and would abide all extremities for what they apprehended to be truth. Put the

question to your own heart, Can I in my conscience believe it to be such an imposture? Can I look up to an omniscient God, and say, "O Lord, thou knowest that it is in reverence to thee, and in love to truth and virtue, that I reject this book, and the method to happiness here laid down?"

§. 4. But there are difficulties in the way.—And what then? Have those difficulties never been cleared? Go to the living advocates for christianity, to those of whose abilities, candour and piety, you have the best opinion; if your prejudices will give you leave to have a good opinion of any such: tell them your difficulties: hear their solutions: weigh them seriously, as those who know they must answer it to God: and while doubts continue, follow the truth as far as it will lead you, and take heed that you do not *imprison it in unrighteousness**. Nothing appears more inconsistent and absurd, than for a man solemnly to pretend dissatisfaction in the evidences of the gospel, as a reason why he cannot in conscience be a thorough christian; when yet at the same time he violates the most apparent dictates of reason and conscience, and lives in vices condemned even by the heathens. O sirs, Christ has judged concerning such, and judged most righteously and most wisely; *they do evil, and therefore they hate the light, neither come they to the light, lest their deeds should be made manifest, and be reproved*†. But there is a light, that will make manifest and reprove their works, to which they shall be compelled to come, and the painful scrutiny of which they shall be forced to abide.

§. 5. In the mean time, if you are determined to enquire no farther into the matter now, give me leave at least, from a sincere concern that you may not heap upon your head more aggravated ruin, to intreat you, that you would he cautious how you expose yourself to yet greater danger, by what you must yourself own to be unnecessary, I mean attempts to prevent others from believing the truth of the gospel. Leave them for God's sake, and for your own, in possession of those pleasures, and those hopes, which nothing but christianity can give them; and act not, as if you were solicitous to add to the guilt of an infidel the tenfold damnation, which they, who have been the perverters and destroyers of the souls of others, must expect to meet, if that gospel which they have so adventurously opposed shall prove, as it certainly will, a serious, and to them a dreadful truth.

§. 6. If I cannot prevail here, but the pride of displaying

* Rom i. 18. † John iii. 20.

a superiority of understanding should bear on such a reader, even in opposition to his own favourite maxims of the innocence of error, and the equality of all religions consistent with social virtue, to do his utmost to trample down the gospel with contempt; I would however dismiss him with one proposal, which I think the importance of the affair may fully justify. If you have done with your examination into christianity, and determine to live and conduct yourself as if it were assuredly false, sit down then, and make a memorandum of that determination. Write it down: "On such a day of such a year, I deliberately resolved, that I would live and die rejecting christianity myself, and doing all I could to overthrow it. This day I determined, not only to renounce all subjection to, and expectation from Jesus of Nazareth; but also to make it a serious part of the business of my life, to destroy, as far as I possibly can, all regard to him in the minds of others, and to exert my most vigorous efforts, in the way of reasoning or of ridicule, to sink the credit of his religion, and if it be possible to root it out of the world; in calm steady defiance of that day, when his followers say, he shall appear in so much majesty and terror to execute the vengeance threatened to his enemies." Dare you write this, and sign it? I firmly believe, that many a man, who would be thought a deist, and endeavours to increase the number, would not. And if you in particular dare not to do it, whence does that small remainder of caution arise? the cause is plain. There is in your conscience some secret apprehension, that this rejected, this opposed, this derided gospel, may after all prove true. And if there be such an apprehension, then let conscience do its office, and convict you of the impious madness of acting, as if it were most certainly and demonstrably false. Let it tell you at large, how possible it is that *haply you may be found fighting against God**: That, bold as you are in defying the terrors of the Lord, you may possibly fall into his hands; may chance to hear that despised sentence, which when you hear it from the mouth of the eternal judge, you will not be able to despise: I will repeat it again, in spite of all your scorn, you may hear the king say to you, *depart accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*†. And now, go and pervert and burlesque the scripture, go and lampoon the character of its heroes, and ridicule the sublime discourses of its prophets and its apostles; as some have done, who have left little behind

* Acts v. 39. † Matt. xxv. 41.

them but the short-lived monuments of their ignorance, their profaneness, and their malice. Go and spread like them the banners of infidelity, and pride thyself in the number of credulous creatures listed under them. But take heed, lest the insulted Galilean direct a secret arrow to thine heart, and stop thy licentious breath, before it has finished the next sentence, thou wouldst utter against him.

§. 7. I will now turn myself from the deist or the sceptic, and direct my address to the nominal christian; if he may upon any terms be called a christian, who feels not, after all I have pleaded, a disposition to subject himself to the government and the grace of that Saviour, whose name he bears. O sinner, thou art turning away from my Lord, in whose cause I speak; but let me earnestly intreat thee seriously to consider, why thou art turning away; and *to whom thou wilt go*, from him, whom thou acknowledgest *to have the words of eternal life**. You call yourself a christian, and yet will not by any means be persuaded to seek salvation in good earnest from and through Jesus Christ, whom you call your master and Lord. How do you for a moment excuse this negligence to your own conscience? If I had urged you on any controverted point, it might have altered the case. If I had laboured hard to make you the disciple of any particular party of christians, your delay might have been more reasonable: Nay, perhaps, your refusing to acquiesce might have been an act of apprehended duty to our common master. But is it matter of controversy amongst christians, whether there be a great, holy, and righteous God; and whether such a being, whom we agree to own, should be reverenced and loved, or neglected and dishonoured? Is it matter of controversy, whether a sinner should deeply and seriously repent of his sins, or whether he should go on in them? Is it a disputed point amongst us, whether Jesus became incarnate, and died upon the cross, for the redemption of sinners or no? And if it be not, can it be disputed by them who believe him to be the Son of God and the Saviour of men, whether a sinner should seek to him, or neglect him, or whether one who professes to be a christian, should depart from iniquity, or give himself up to the practice of it? Are the precepts of our great master written so obscurely in his word, that there should be room seriously to question, whether he require a devout, holy, humble, spiritual, watchful, self-denying life, or whether he allow the contrary? Has Christ,

* John vi. 68.

after all his pretensions of bringing life and immortality to light, left it more uncertain than he found it, whether there be any future state of happiness and misery, or for whom these states are respectively intended? Is it a matter of controversy, whether God will, or will not *bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing whether it be good, or whether it be evil**? or whether, at the conclusion of that judgment, *the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal*† ? You will not, I am sure, for very shame, pretend any doubt about these things, and yet call yourself a christian. Why then will you not be persuaded to lay them to heart, and to act as duty and interest so evidently require? Oh sinner, the cause is too obvious; a cause indeed quite unworthy of being called a reason. It is because thou art blinded and besotted with thy vanities and thy lusts. It is because thou hast some perishing trifle, which charms thy imagination and thy senses, so that it is dearer to thee than God and Christ, than thy own soul and its salvation. It is, in a word, because thou art still under the influence of that carnal mind, which, whatever pious forms it may sometimes admit and pretend, *is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*‡. And therefore thou art in the very case of those wretches, concerning whom our Lord said in the days of his flesh, *Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life*§, and therefore *ye shall die in your sins*‖.

§. 8. In this case I see not what it can signify, to renew those expostulations and addresses which I have made in the former chapters. As our blessed Redeemer says of those who rejected his gospel, *Ye have both seen and hated both me and my Father*¶; so may I truly say with regard to you, I have endeavoured to shew you in the plainest and the clearest words, both Christ and the Father; I have urged the obligations you are under to both; I have laid before you your guilt, and your condemnation; I have pointed out the only remedy; I have pointed out the rock, on which I have built my own eternal hopes, and the way in which alone I expect salvation. I have recommended those things to you, which, if God gives me an opportunity, I will with my dying breath earnestly and affectionately recommend to my own children, and to all the dearest friends that I have upon earth, who may then be near me; esteeming it the highest token of my friendship, the surest

* Eccles. xii. 14. † Matt. xxv. 46. ‡ Rom. viii. 7.
§ John v. 40. ‖ John viii. 24. ¶ John xv. 24.

proof of my love to them. And if believing the gospel to be true, you resolve to reject it, I have nothing farther to say, but that you must abide by the consequence.——Yet as Moses, when he went out from the presence of Pharaoh for the last time, finding his heart yet more hardened by all the judgments and deliverances with which he had formerly been exercised, denounced upon him *God's passing through the land*, in terror *to smite the first-born with death*, and warned him of *that great and lamentable cry* which *the sword of the destroying angel* should raise *throughout all his realm**: So will I, sinner, now when I am quitting thee, speak to thee yet again, *whether thou wilt hear, or whether thou wilt forbear*†, and denounce that much more terrible judgment, which the *sword* of divine vengeance, already *whetted* and *drawn and bathed*, as it were, *in heaven*‡, is preparing against thee; which shall end in a much more dreadful cry, though thou wert greater and more obstinate than that haughty monarch. Yes, sinner, that I may, with the apostle Paul, when turning to others who are more like to hear me, *shake my raiment, and say, I am pure from your blood*§; I will once more tell you what the end of things will be. And, Oh that I could speak to purpose! Oh that I could thunder in thine ear, such a peal of terror, as might awaken thee, and be too loud to be drowned in all the noise of carnal mirth, or to be deadened by those dangerous opiates, with which thou art contriving to stupify thy conscience!

§. 9. Seek what amusements and entertainments thou wilt O sinner, I tell thee, if thou wert equal in dignity, and power, and magnificence, to the great monarch of Babylon, *thy pomp shall be brought down* to the grave, and all *the sound of thy viols; the worm shall be spread under thee, and the worm shall cover thee*‖. Yes, sinner, *the end of these things is death*¶; death in its most terrible sense to thee, if this continue thy governing temper. Thou canst not avoid it; and, if it be possible for any thing that I can say to prevent, thou shalt not forget it. Your *strength is not the strength of stones, nor is your flesh of brass***. You are accessible to diseases, as well as others; and if some sudden accident do not prevent it, we shall soon see, how heroically you will behave yourself on a dying bed, and in the near views of eternity. You that now despise Christ, and trifle with his gospel, we shall see you droop and languish; shall see all your relish for your carnal recreations, and your vain companions lost. And if perhaps

* Exod. xi. 4—6. † Ezek. ii. 7. ‡ Isai. xxxiv. 5. § Acts xviii. 6.
‖ Isai. xiv. 11. ¶ Rom. vi. 21. ** Job vi. 12.

one and another of them bolt in upon you, and is brutish and desperate enough to attempt to entertain a dying man with a gay story, or a profane jest, we shall see how you will relish it. We shall see, what comfort you will have in reflecting on what is past, or what hope in looking forward to what is to come. Perhaps trembling and astonished, you will then be enquiring in a wild kind of consternation, what you should do to be saved; calling for the ministers of Christ, whom you now despise for the earnestness with which they would labour to save your soul! and it may be falling into a delirium, or dying convulsions, before they can come. Or perhaps we may see you, flattering yourself through a long lingering illness, that you shall still recover, and putting off any serious reflection and conversation, for fear it should overset your spirits. And the cruel kindness of friends and physicians, as if they were in league with satan to make the destruction of your soul as sure as possible, may perhaps abet this fatal deceit.

§. 10. And if any of these probable cases happen, that is, in short, unless a miracle of grace snatch you as a brand out of the burning, when the flames have as it were already taken hold of you; all these gloomy circumstances, which pass in the chambers of illness and the bed of death, are but the forerunners of infinitely more dreadful things. Oh, who can describe them! who can imagine them! When surviving friends are tenderly mourning over the breathless corpse, and taking a fond farewell of it before it is laid to consume away in the dark and silent grave, into what hands, O sinner, will thy soul be fallen! What scenes will open upon thy separate spirit, even before thy deserted flesh be cold, or thy sightless eyes are closed? It shall then know, what it is to return to God to be rejected by him, as having rejected his gospel and his Son, and despised the only treaty of reconciliation; and that such a one, so amazingly condescending and gracious. Thou shalt know, what it is to be disowned by Christ, whom thou hast refused to entertain; and what it is, as the certain and immediate consequence of that to be left in the hands of the malignant spirits of hell. There will be no more friendship then: None to comfort, none to alleviate thy agony and distress: But on the contrary, all around thee labouring to aggravate and increase them. Thou shalt pass away the intermediate years of the separate state, in dreadful expectation, and bitter outcries of horror and remorse. And then, thou shalt hear the trumpet of the arch-angel, in whatever cavern of that gloomy world thou art lodged. Its sound shall penetrate thy prison, where, doleful and horrible as it is, thou

shalt nevertheless wish, that thou mightest still be allowed to hide thy guilty head, rather then shew it before the face of that awful judge, before whom *heaven and earth are fleeing away.** But thou must come forth, and be re-united to a body, now formed for ever to endure agonies, which in this mortal state would have dissolved it in a moment. You would not be persuaded to come to Christ before: You would stupidly neglect him in spite of reason, in spite of conscience, in spite of all the tenderest solicitations of the gospel, and the repeated admonitions of its most faithful ministers. But now, sinner, you shall have an interview with him; if that may be called an interview, in which you will not dare to lift up your head to view the face of your tremendous and inexorable judge. There, at least, how distant soever the time of our life and the place of our abode may have been, there shall we see how courageously *your heart will endure*; and how *strong your hands will be when the Lord doth this.*† There shall I see thee, O reader, whoever thou art that goest on in thine impenitency, among thousands and ten thousands of despairing wretches, trembling and confounded. There shall I hear thy cries among the rest, rending the very heavens in vain. The judge will rise from his tribunal with majestic composure, and leave thee to be hurried down to those everlasting burnings, to which his righteous vengeance hath doomed thee, because thou wouldst not be saved from them. Hell shall shut its mouth upon thee for ever, and the sad echo of thy groans and outcries shall be lost amidst the hallelujahs of heaven to all that find mercy of the Lord in that day.

§. 11. This will most assuredly be the end of these things: And thou, as a christian, professest to know, and to believe it. It moves my heart at least, if it moves not thine. I firmly believe, that every one, who himself obtains salvation and glory, will bear so much of his Saviour's image in wisdom and goodness, in zeal for God, and a steady regard to the happiness of the whole creation, that he will behold this sad scene with calm approbation, and without any painful commotion of mind But as yet I am flesh and blood; and therefore my bowels are troubled, and mine eyes often overflow with grief, to think that wretched sinners will have no more compassion upon their own souls; to think, that in spite of all admonition, they will obstinately run upon final everlasting destruction. It would signify nothing here to add a prayer or meditation for your use. Poor creature, you will not meditate! you will not pray! Yet as I

* Rev. xx. 11. † Ezek. xxii. 14.

have often poured out my heart in prayer over a dying friend, when the force of his distemper has rendered him incapable of joining with me; so I will now apply myself to God for you, O unhappy creature! And if you disdain so much as to read what my compassion dictates; yet I hope, they who have felt the power of the gospel on their own souls, as they cannot but pity such as you, will join with me in such cordial, though broken petitions, as these.

A Prayer in Behalf of an Impenitent Sinner, in the Case described above.

"ALMIGHTY God! *with thee all things are possible:** To thee therefore do I humbly apply myself in behalf of this dear immortal soul, which thou here seest perishing in its sins, and hardening itself against that everlasting gospel, which has been the power of God to the salvation of so many thousands and millions. Thou art witness, O blessed God, thou art witness to the plainness and seriousness, with which the message has been delivered. It is in thy presence that these awful words have been written; and in thy presence have they been read. Be pleased therefore to record it in the book of thy remembrance, that so if this *wicked man dieth in his iniquity*,† after the warning has been so plainly and solemnly given him, *his blood may not be required at my hand*, nor at the hand of that christian friend, whoever he is, by whom this book has been put into his, with a sincere desire for the salvation of his soul. Be witness, O blessed Jesus, *in the day in which thou shalt judge the secrets of all hearts*,‡ that thy gospel hath been preached to this hardened wretch, and salvation by thy blood hath been offered him, though he continue to despise it. And may thy unworthy messenger be *unto God a sweet savour in Christ*, ‖ in this very soul, even though it should at last perish!

"But, Oh that, after all his hardness and impenitence, thou wouldst still be pleased, by the sovereign power of thine efficacious grace, to awaken and convert him! Well do we know, Oh, thou Lord of universal nature, that he who made the soul, can cause the sword of conviction to come near and enter into it. Oh that, in thine infinite wisdom and love, thou wouldst find out a way to interpose, and save this sinner from death, from eternal death! Oh that if it be thy blessed will, thou wouldst immediately do it: thou knowest, O God, he is a dying

* Mat. xix. 26. † Ezek. xxxiii. 8, 9. ‡ Rom. ii. 16. ‖ 2 Cor. ii. 15.

creature: thou knowest, that if any thing be done for him, it must be done quickly: thou seest, in the book of thy wise and gracious decrees, a moment marked, which must seal him up in an unchangeable state: Oh that thou wouldst lay hold on him, while he is yet *joined with the living, and hath hope**! Thy immutable laws in the dispensation of grace forbid, that a soul should be converted and renewed after its entrance on the invisible world: O let thy sacred spirit work, while he is yet as it were within the sphere of its operations! Work, O God, by whatever method thou pleasest; only have mercy upon him! O Lord have mercy upon him, that he sink not into those depths of damnation and ruin, upon the very brink of which he so evidently appears! Oh that thou wouldst bring him, if that be necessary, and seem to thee most expedient, into any depths of calamity and distress! Oh that with Manasseh, he may be *taken in the thorns, and laden with the fetters of affliction*, if that may but cause him *to seek the God of his fathers*†."

But I prescribe not to thine infinite wisdom. Thou hast displayed thy power in glorious and astonishing instances; which I thank thee, that I have so circumstantially known, and by the knowledge of them have been fortified against the rash confidence of those who weakly and arrogantly pronounce that to be impossible, which is actually done. Thou hast, I know, done that by a single thought in retirement, when the happy man reclaimed by it hath been far from means, and far from ordinances, which neither the most awful admonitions, nor the most tender intreaties, nor the most terrible afflictions, nor the most wonderful deliverances had been able to effect.

Glorify thy name, O Lord, and glorify thy grace in the method which to thine infinite wisdom shall seem most expedient! Only grant, I beseech thee, with all humble submission to thy will, that this sinner may be saved! or if not, that the labour of this part may not be altogether in vain; but that if some reject it to their aggravated ruin, others may hearken and live! That those thy servants, who have laboured for their deliverance and happiness, may view them in the regions of glory, as the spoils with which thou hast honoured them as the instruments of recovering; and may join with them in the hallelujahs of heaven *to him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us*, of condemned rebels, and accursed polluted sinners, kings and priests unto God; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever! Amen‡."

* Eccles. ix. 4. † 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11, 12. ‡ Rev. i. 5, 6.

CHAP. XII.

An Address to a Soul so overwhelmed with a Sense of the Greatness of its Sins, that it dares not apply itself to Christ with any Hope of Salvation.

The Case described at large, §. 1—4. As it frequently occurs, §. 5. Granting all that the dejected Soul charges on itself, §. 6. The Invitations and Promises of Christ give Hope, §. 7. The Reader urged, under all his Burdens and Fears, to an humble Application to him, §. 8. Which is accordingly exemplified in the concluding Reflection and Prayer.

§. 1. I HAVE now done with those unhappy creatures who despise the gospel, and with those who neglect it. With pleasure do I now turn myself to those, who will hear me with more regard. Among the various cases, which now present themselves to my thoughts, and demand my tender, affectionate, respectful care, there is none more worthy of compassion, than that which I have mentioned in the title of this chapter; none which requires a more immediate attempt of relief.

§. 2. It is very possible some afflicted creature may be ready to cry out, "it is enough: aggravate my grief, and my distress no more. The sentence you have been so awfully describing, as what shall be passed and executed on the impenitent and unbelieving, is my sentence; and the terrors of it are my terrors. For *mine iniquities are gone up unto the heavens, and my transgressions have reached unto the clouds**. My case is quite singular. Surely there never was so great a sinner as I. I have received so many mercies, have enjoyed so many advantages, I have heard so many invitations of gospel grace; and yet my heart has been so hard, and my nature is so exceeding sinful, and the number and aggravating circumstances of my provocations have been such, that I dare not hope. It is enough, that God hath supported me thus long; it is enough, that after so many years of wickedness, I am yet out of hell. Every day's reprieve is a mercy, at which I am astonished. I lie down, and wonder that death and damnation have not seized me in my walks the day past. I arise and wonder, that my bed hath not been my grave: wonder that my soul is not separated from flesh, and surrounded with devils and damned spirits."

§. 3. I have indeed heard the message of salvation; but alas, it seems no message of salvation to me. There are happy

* Rev. xviii. 5.

souls that have hope; and their hope is indeed in Christ, and the grace of God manifested in him. But then they feel in their hearts an encouragement to apply to him, whereas I dare not do it. Christ and grace are things, in which, I fear, I have no part, and must expect none. There are exceeding rich and precious promises in the word of God; but they are to me as a sealed book, and are hid from me as to any personal use. I know, Christ is able to save: I know he is willing to save some. But that he should be willing to save me, such a polluted, such a provoking creature, as God knows, and as conscience knows, I have been and to this day am; this I know not how to believe: and the utmost that I can do towards believing it, is to acknowledge that it is not absolutely impossible, and that I do not yet lie down in complete despair; though alas, I seem upon the very borders of it; and expect every day and hour to fall into it."

§. 4. I should not perhaps have entered so fully into this case, if I had not seen many in it; and I will add, reader, for your encouragement, if it be your case, several who are now in the number of the most established, cheerful, and useful christians. And I hope divine grace will add you to the rest, if *out of these depths*, you be enabled to *cry unto God**; and though, like Jonah, you may seem to be *cast out from his presence*, yet still, with Jonah, *look towards his holy temple*†.

§. 5. Let it not be imagined, that it is from any neglect of that blessed Spirit, whose office it is to be the great comforter, that I now attempt to reason you out of this disconsolate frame; for it is as the great source of reason, that he deals with rational creatures; and it is in the use of rational means and considerations, that he may most justly be expected to operate. Give me leave, therefore, to address myself calmly to you, and to ask you, what reason you have for all these passionate complaints and accusations against yourself? What reason have you to suggest, that your case is singular, when so many have told you, they have felt the same? What reason have you to conclude so hardly against yourself, when the gospel speaks in such favourable terms? Or what reason to imagine, that the gracious things it says are not intended for you? You know indeed more of the corruptions of your own heart, than you know of the hearts of others; and you make a thousand charitable excuses for their visible failings and infirmities, which you make not for your own. And it may be, some of those, whom

* Psal. cxxx. 1. † Jonah ii. 4.

you admire as eminent saints when compared with you, are on their part humbling themselves in the dust, as unworthy to be numbered amongst the least of God's people, and wishing themselves like you, in whom they think they see much more good, and much less of evil, than in themselves.

§. 6. But to suppose the worst, what if you were really the vilest sinner that ever lived upon the face of the earth? What if *your iniquities had gone up unto the heavens every day, and your transgressions had reached unto the clouds**; reached thither with such horrid aggravations, that earth and heaven should have had reason to detest you, as a monster of impiety? Admitting all this, *is any thing too hard for the Lord*† ? Are any sins of which a sinner can repent, of so deep a dye, that the blood of Christ cannot wash them away? Nay, though it would be daring wickedness and monstrous folly, for any *to sin that grace may abound*‡, yet had you indeed raised your account beyond all that divine grace has ever yet pardoned, who *should limit the Holy One of Israel*‖ ? or who should pretend to say, that it was impossible that God might for your very wretchedness chuse you out from others, to make you a monument of mercy, and a trophy of hitherto unparelleled grace? The apostle Paul strongly intimates this to have been the case, with regard to himself: and why might not you likewise, if indeed *the chief of sinners, obtain mercy, that in you, as the chief, Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who shall hereafter believe*§.

§. 7. Gloomy as your apprehensions are, I would ask you plainly, do you in your conscience think, that Christ is not able to save you? What! is he not *able to save even to the uttermost, them that come unto God by him*¶ ? Yes, you will say, abundantly able to do it; but I dare not imagine that he will do it. And how do you know that he will not? He has helped the very greatest sinners of all that have yet applied themselves to him: and he has made the offers of grace and salvation in the most engaging and encouraging terms. *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink***: *Let him that is athrist, come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*††: *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*‡‡: and once more, *him that*

* Rev. xviii. 5. † Gen. xviii. 14. ‡ Rom. vi. 1.
‖ Psal. lxxviii. 41. § 1 Tim. i. 15, 16. ¶ Heb. vii. 25.
** John vii. 37. †† Rev. xxii. 17. ‡‡ Mat. xi. 28.

*cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out**. True, you will say, none that are given him by the Father: could I know I were of that number, I could then apply cheerfully to him. But, dear reader, let me intreat you to look into the text itself, and see whether that limitation be expressly added there. Do you there read, none of them whom the Father hath given me, shall be cast out? The words are in a much more encouraging form: and why should you frustrate his wisdom and goodness, by such an addition of your own? *Add not to his words, lest he reprove thee*†: take them as they stand, and drink in the consolation of them. Our Lord knew into what perplexity some serious minds might possibly be thrown by what he had before been saying, *all that the Father hath given me shall come unto me;* and therefore, as it were on purpose to balance it, he adds those gracious words, *him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise,* by no means, on no consideration whatsoever, *cast out.*

§. 8. If therefore you are already discouraged and terrified at the greatness of your sins, do not add to their weight and number that one greater and worse than all the rest, a distrust of the faithfulness and grace of the blessed Redeemer. Do not, so far as in you lies, oppose all the purposes of his love to you. O distressed soul, whom dost thou dread? To whom dost thou tremble to approach? Is there any thing so terrible in a crucified Redeemer, in the Lamb that was slain? If thou carriest thy soul, almost sinking under the burden of its guilt, to lay it down at his feet, what dost thou offer him, but the spoil which he bled and died to recover and possess? And did he purchase it so dearly, that he might reject it with disdain? Go to him directly, and fall down in his presence, and plead that misery of thine, which thou hast now been pleading in a contrary view, as an engagement to your own soul to make the application, and as an argument with a compassionate Saviour to receive you. Go and be assured, that *where sin hath abounded, there grace shall much more abound*‡. Be assured, that if one sinner can promise himself a more certain welcome than another, it is not he that is least guilty and miserable, but he that is most deeply humbled before God, under a sense of that misery and guilt, and lies the lowest in the apprehension of it.

* John vi. 37. † Prov. xxx. 6. ‡ Rom. v. 20.

Reflections on these Encouragements, ending in an humble and earnest Application to Christ for mercy.

" O MY soul, what sayest thou to these things? Is there not at least a possibility of help from Christ? And is there a possibility of help any other way? Is *any other name given under heaven, whereby we can be saved** ? I know, there is none, I must then say, like the lepers of Israel†, *if I sit here, I perish; and if I make my application in vain, I can but die.* But peradventure, he may save my soul alive. I will therefore arise, and go unto him; or rather, believing him here, by his spiritual presence, sinful and miserable as I am, I will this moment fall down on my face before him, and pour out my soul unto him

" Blessed Jesus, I present myself unto thee, as a wretched creature, driven indeed by necessity, to do it. For surely were not that necessity urgent and absolute, I should not dare for very shame to appear in thine holy and majestic presence. I am fully convinced, that my sins and my folly have been inexcusably great; more than I can express, more than I can conceive. I feel a source of sin, in my corrupt and degenerate nature, which pours out iniquity, as a fountain sends out its water, and makes me a burden and a terror to myself. Such aggravations have attended my transgressions, that it looks like presumption, so much as to ask pardon for them. And yet, would it not be greater presumption to say, that they exceed thy mercy, and the efficacy of thy blood; to say, that thou hast power and grace enough to pardon and save only sinners of a lower order, while such as I lie out of thy reach? Preserve me from that blasphemous imagination! Preserve me from that unreasonable suspicion! Lord, *thou canst do all things, neither is there any thought of mine heart withholden from thee*‡. Thou art indeed, as thy word declares, *able to save unto the uttermost*§. And therefore, breaking through all the oppositions of shame and fear, that would keep me from thee, I come and lie down as in the dust before thee. Thou knowest, O Lord, all my sins, and *all my follies*‖. I cannot, and I hope, I may say, I would not, disguise them before thee, or set myself to find out plausible excuses. Accuse me, Lord, as thou pleasest: and I will ingenuously plead guilty to all thine accusations. I will own myself as great a sinner, as thou callest me: but I am still a sinner, that comes unto thee for pardon.

* Acts iv. 12. † 2 Kings vii. 4. ‡ Job xlii. 2. § Heb. vii. 25. ‖ Psal. lxix. 5.

If I must die, it shall be submitting, and owning the justice of the fatal stroke. If I perish, it shall be laying hold, as it were, on the horns of the altar; laying myself down at thy footstool, though I have been such a rebel against thy throne. Many have received a full pardon there; have met with favour even beyond their hopes. And are all thy compassions, O blessed Jesus, exhausted? And wilt thou now begin to reject an humble creature, who flies to thee for life, and pleads nothing but mercy and free grace? Have mercy upon me, O most gracious Redeemer, *have mercy upon me, and let my life be precious in thy sight*!* Oh do not resolve to send me down to that state of final misery and despair, from which it was thy gracious purpose to deliver and save so many!

Spurn me not away, O Lord, from thy presence, nor be offended when I presume to lay hold on thy royal robe, and say that I cannot and *will not let thee go, till my suit is granted* †! Oh remember, that all my hopes of obtaining eternal happiness, and avoiding everlasting, helpless, hopeless destruction, are anchored upon thee; they hang upon thy smiles, or drop at thy frown. Oh have mercy upon me, for the sake of this immortal soul of mine! Or if not for the sake of mine alone, for the sake of many others, who may, on the one hand, be encouraged by thy mercy to me, or on the other, may be greatly wounded and discouraged by my helpless despair! I beseech thee, O Lord, for thine own sake, and for the display of thy Father's rich and sovereign grace! I beseech thee, by the blood thou didst shed on the cross! I beseech thee by the covenant of grace and peace, into which the Father did enter with thee for the salvation of believing and repenting sinners, save me! save me, O Lord, who earnestly desire to repent and believe! I am indeed a sinner, in whose final and everlasting destruction thy justice might be greatly glorified: But Oh! if thou wilt pardon me, it will be a monument raised to the honour of thy grace, and the efficacy of thy blood, in proportion to the degree in which the wretch, to whom thy mercy is extended, was mean and miserable without it. Speak, Lord, by thy blessed spirit, and banish my fears! Look unto me with love and grace in thy countenance, and say to me, as in the days of thy flesh thou didst to many an humble suppliant, thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace!"

* 2 Kings i. 14. † Gen. xxxii. 26.

CHAP. XIII.

The doubting Soul more particularly assisted in its Enquiries as to the Sincerity of its Faith and Repentance.

Transient Impressions liable to be mistaken for Conversion which would be a fatal Error, §. 1. General Schemes for Self-Examination, §. 2. Particular Enquiries? (1.) What Views there have been of Sin? §. 3. (2.) What Views there have been of Christ? §. 4. As to the Need the Soul has of Him; §. 5. And its Willingness to receive Him, with a due Surrender of Heart to his Service, §. 6. Nothing short of this, sufficient, §. 7. The soul submitting to divine Examination, the Sincerity of its Faith and Repentance.

§. 1. IN consequence of all the serious things, which have been said in the former chapters, I hope it will be no false presumption to imagine, that some religious impressions may be made on hearts which had never felt them before; or may be revived, where they have formerly grown cold and languid. Yet I am very sensible, and I desire that you may be so, how great danger there is in self flattery on this important head; and how necessary it is to caution men, against too hasty a conclusion that they are really converted, because they have felt some warm emotions on their minds, and have reformed the gross irregularities of their former conduct. A mistake here might be infinitely fatal: It may prove the occasion of that false peace, which shall lead a man to bless himself in his own heart, and to conclude himself secure, while all the threatenings and curses of God's law are sounding in his ears, and lie indeed directly against him*; while in the mean time he applies to himself a thousand promises in which he has no share; which may prove therefore like generous wine to a man in a high fever, or strong opiates to one in a lethargy. *The stony ground received the word with joy*, and a promising harvest seemed to be springing up; yet *it soon withered away*†, and no reaper filled his arms with it. Now that this may not be the case with you, that all my labours and yours hitherto may not be lost, and that a vain dream of security and happiness may not plunge you deeper in misery and ruin, give me leave to lead you into a serious enquiry into your own heart; that so you may be better able to judge of your case, and to distinguish between what is at most being only near the kingdom of heaven, and becoming indeed a member of it.

* Deut. xxix. 19. 20. † Matt. xiii. 5, 6.

§. 2. Now this depends upon the sincerity of your faith in Christ, when faith is taken in its largest extent, as explained above; that is, as comprehending repentance, and that steady purpose of new and universal obedience, of which, wherever it is real, faith will assuredly be the vital principle. Therefore to assist you in judging of your state, give me leave to ask you, or rather to intreat you to ask yourself, What views you have had, and now have, of sin, and of Christ? And what your future purposes are, with regard to your conduct in the remainder of life that may lie before you? I shall not reason largely upon the several particulars I suggest under those heads, but rather refer you to your own reading and observation, to judge how agreeable they are to the word of God, the great rule by which our characters must quickly be tried, and our eternal state unalterably determined.

§. 3. Enquire seriously, in the first place, what views you have had of sin, and what sentiments you have felt in your soul with regard to it: there was a time, when it wore a flattering aspect, and made a fair inchanting appearance, so that all your heart was charmed with it, and it was the very business of your life to practise it. But you have since been undeceived. You have felt it *bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder.** You have beheld it with an abhorrence, far greater than the delight which it ever gave you. So far it is well. It is thus with every true penitent, and with some, I fear, who are not of that number. Let me therefore enquire farther, whence arose this abhorrence? Was it merely from a principle of self-love? Was it merely because you had been wounded by it? Was it merely because you had thereby brought condemnation and ruin upon your own soul? Was there no sense of its deformity, of its baseness, of its malignity, as committed against the blessed God, considered as a glorious, a bountiful, and a merciful being? Were you never pierced by the apprehension of its vile ingratitude? And as for those purposes which have arisen in your heart against it, let me beseech you to reflect, how they have been formed, and how they have hitherto been executed. Have they been universal? Have they been resolute? And yet amidst all that resolution, have they been humble? When you declared war with sin, was it with every sin? And is it an irreconcileable war, which you determine, by divine grace, to push on till you have entirely conquered it, or die in the attempt? And are you accordingly active in your endeavours to subdue

* Prov. xxiii. 32.

and destroy it? If so, what are *the fruits worthy of repentance* which you *bring forth?** It does not, I hope, all flow away in floods of grief: have you ceased to do evil? Are you *learning to do well!*† Doth your reformation shew, that you repent of your sins; or do your renewed relapses into sin prove, that you repent even of what you call your repentance? Have you an inward abhorrence of all sin, and an unfeigned zeal against it? And doth that produce a care to guard against the occasions of it, and temptations to it? Do you watch against the circumstances that have insnared you? And do you particularly double your guard against *that sin which does most easily beset you?*‡ Is that laid aside, that the christian race may be run; laid aside with a firm determination, that you will return to it no more, that you will hold no more parley with it, that you will never take another step towards it?

§. Permit me also farther to enquire, what your views of Christ have been? "What think you of him, and of your concern with him?" Have you been fully convinced, that there must be a correspondence settled between him and your soul? And do you see and feel, that you are not only to pay him a kind of distant homage, and transient compliment, as a very wise, benevolent, and excellent person, whose name and memory you have a reverence for; but that, as he lives and reigns, as he is ever near you, and always observing you, so you must look to him, must approach him, must humbly transact business with him, and that business of the highest importance, on which your salvation depends?

§. 5. You have been brought to enquire, *wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most high God?*§ And once perhaps you were thinking of sacrifices, which your own stores might have been sufficient to furnish out. Are you now convinced, they will not suffice; and that you must have recourse to the Lamb which God hath provided? Have you had a view of Jesus, *as taking away the sin of the world?*‖ as *made a sin offering for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him?*¶ Have you viewed him, as perfectly righteous in himself; and despairing of being justified by any righteousness of your own, have you *submitted to the righteousness of God?*** Has your heart ever been brought to a deep conviction of this important truth, that if ever you are saved at all, it must be through Christ; that if ever God

* Luke iii. 8. † Isai. i. 16, 17. ‡ Heb. xii. 1. § Mic. vi. 6.
‖ John i. 29. ¶ 2 Cor. v. 21. ** Rom. x. 3.

extend mercy to you all, it must be for his sake; that if ever you are fixed in the temple of God above, you must stand there as an everlasting trophy of that victory which Christ has gained over the powers of hell, who would otherwise have triumphed over you?

§. 6. Our Lord says, *look unto me, and be ye saved*;* He says, *If I be lifted up, I shall draw all men unto me.*† Have you looked to him, as the only Saviour? Have you been drawn unto him, by that sacred magnet, the attracting influence of his dying love? Do you know what it is to come to Christ, as a poor *weary and heavy laden sinner*, that you may *find rest*?‡ Do you know what it is, in a spiritual sense, to *eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man*;§ that is, to look upon Christ crucified as the great support of your soul, and to feel a desire after him, earnest as the appetite of nature after its necessary food? Have you known what it is cordially to surrender yourself to Christ, as a poor creature whom love has made his property? Have you committed your immortal soul to him, that he may purify and save it; that he may govern it by the dictates of his word, and the influences of his spirit; that he may use it for his glory: that he may appoint it to what exercise and discipline he pleases, while it dwells here in flesh; and that he may receive it at death, and fix it among those spirits who with perpetual songs of praise surround his throne, and are his servants for ever? Have you heartily consented to this? And do you, on this account of the matter, renew your consent? Do you renew it deliberately and determinately, and feel your whole soul, as it were, saying amen, while you read this? If this be the case, then I can with great pleasure give you (as it were) the right hand of fellowship, and salute and embrace you as a sincere disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, as one who is *delivered from the powers of darkness*, and is *translated into the kingdom of the Son of God.*‖ I can then salute you in the Lord, as one to whom, as a minister of Jesus, I am commissioned and charged to speak comfortably, and to tell you, not that I absolve you from your sins, for it is a small matter to be judged of man's judgment, but that the blessed God himself absolveth you; that you are one, to whom he hath said in his gospel, and is continually saying, *your sins are forgiven you*;¶ therefore go in peace, and take the comfort of it.

* Isai. xlv. 22. † John xii. 32. ‡ Mat. xi. 28.
§ John vi. 53. ‖ Col. i. 13 ¶ Luke vii. 48.

§. 7. But if you are a stranger to these experiences, and to this temper which I have now described, the great work is yet undone; you are an impenitent and unbelieving sinner, and *the wrath of God abideth on you**. However you may have been awakened and alarmed, whatever resolution you may have formed for amending your life, how right soever your notions may be, how pure soever your forms of worship, how ardent soever your zeal, how severe soever your mortification, how humane soever your temper, how inoffensive soever your life may be, I can speak no comfort to you. Vain are all your religious hopes, if there has not been a cordial humiliation before the presence of God for all your sins; if there has not been this avowed war declared against every thing displeasing to God; if there has not been this sense of your need of Christ, and of your ruin without him; if there has not been this earnest application to him; this surrender of your soul into his hands by faith; this renunciation of yourself, that you might fix on him the anchor of your hope; if there has not been this unreserved dedication of yourself to be at all times, and in all respects, the faithful servant of God through him; and if you do not with all this acknowledge that you are an unprofitable servant, who have no other expectations of acceptance or pardon, but only through his righteousness and blood, and through the riches of divine grace in him; I repeat it again that all your hopes are vain, and you are *building on the sand*.† The house you have already raised must be thrown down to the ground, and the foundation be removed and laid anew, or you, and all your hopes, will shortly be swept away with it, and buried under it in everlasting ruin.

The Soul submitting to Divine Examination, the Sincerity of its Repentance and Faith.

"O LORD God, thou *searchest all hearts*, and *triest the reins*‡ of the children of men. *Search me, O Lord, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead in the way everlasting*.§ Doth not conscience, O Lord, testify in thy presence, that my repentance and faith are such as have been described, or at least that it is my earnest prayer, that they may be so? Come therefore, O thou blessed Spirit, who art the author of all grace, and consolation, and work this temper more fully in my soul! Oh

* John iii. 36. † Mat. vii. 26. ‡ Jer. xvii. 10. § Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

represent sin to mine eyes in all its most odious colours, that I may feel a mortal and irreconcileable hatred to it! O represent the majesty and mercy of the blessed God in such a manner, that my heart may be alarmed, and that it may be melted! *Smite the rock, that the waters may flow;** waters of genuine, undissembled, and filial repentance! Convince me, O thou blessed Spirit, *of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.*† Shew me that *I have undone myself; but that my help is found in God alone,*‡ in God through Christ, in whom alone he will extend compassion and help me! According to thy peculiar office, *take of Christ and shew it unto me!* § Shew me his power to save! Shew me his willingness to exert that power! Teach my faith to behold him, as extended on the cross, with open arms, with a pierced bleeding side; and so telling me in the most forcible language, what room there is in his very heart for me! May I know what it is to have my whole heart subdued by love; so subdued as to be *crucified with him;* ‖ to be dead to sin, and dead to the world, *but alive unto God through Jesus Christ!*¶ In his power and love may I confide! To him may I without any reserve commit my spirit! His image may I bear! His laws may I observe! His service may I pursue! And may I remain, through time and eternity, a monument of the efficacy of his gospel, and a trophy of his victorious grace!

"Oh blessed God! if there be any thing wanting towards constituting me a sincere christian, discover it to me, and work it in me! Beat down, I beseech thee, every false and presumptuous hope, how costly soever that building may have been which is thus lain in ruins, and how proud soever I may have been of its vain ornaments! Let me know the worst of my case, be that knowledge ever so distressful; and if there be remaining danger, O let my heart be fully sensible while yet there is remedy!

If there be any secret sin yet lurking in my soul, which I have not sincerely renounced, discover it to me, and rend it out of my heart, though it should have shot its roots ever so deep, and should have wrapped them all around it, so that every nerve should be pained by its separation! Tear it away, O Lord, by a hand graciously severe! And by degrees, yea, Lord, by speedy advances, go on, I beseech thee, to *perfect what is still lacking in my faith** *!* Accomplish in me *all the good*

* Psal. lxxviii. 20. † John xvi. 8. ‡ Hos. xiii. 9.
§ John xvi. 15. ‖ Rom. vi. 6. ¶ Rom. vi. 11.

pleasure of thy goodness† : inrich me, O heavenly Father, with all the graces of thy spirit: form me to the complete image of thy dear Son: and then, for his sake, *come unto me and manifest thy gracious presence in my soul*‡, till it is ripened for that state of glory, for which all these operations are intended to prepare it! Amen."

CHAP. XIV.

A more particular View of the several Branches of the Christian Temper; by which the Reader may be farther assisted, in judging what he is, and what he should endeavour to be‖.

The Importance of the Case engages to a more particular Survey, what Manner of Spirit we are of: §. 1, 2. Accordingly the Christian Temper is described, (I.) By some general Views of it; as a New and Divine Temper, §. 3. As resembling that of Christ, §. 4. And as engaging us to be spiritually Minded, and to walk by Faith, §. 5. A Plan of the Remainder: §. 6. In which the Christian Temper is more particularly considered. (II.) With Regard to the Blessed God; as including Fear, Affection, and Obedience, §. 7. Faith and Love to Christ, §. 8, 9. Joy in Him, §. 10. And a proper Temper towards the Holy Spirit, particularly as a Spirit of Adoption, and of Courage, §. 11—13. (III.) With Regard to ourselves; as including Preference of the Soul to the Body, Humility, Purity, §. 14. Temperance, §. 15. Contentment, §. 16. And Patience, §. 17. (IV.) With Regard to our Fellow-Creatures; as including Love, §. 18. Meekness, §. 19. Peaceableness, §. 20. Mercy, §. 21. Truth, §. 22. And Candour in judging, §. 23. (V.) General Qualifications of each Branch, §. 24. Such as Sincerity, §. 25. Constancy, §. 26. Tenderness, §. 27. Zeal, §. 28. And Prudence, §. 29. These Things should frequently be recollected, §. 30. A Review of all in a scriptural Prayer.

§. 1. WHEN I consider the infinite importance of eternity, I find it exceeding difficult to satisfy myself in any thing which I can say to men, where their eternal interests are concerned. I have given you a view, I hope I may truly say, a just, as well as faithful view, of a truly christian temper already. Yet for your farther assistance, I would offer it to your consideration in various points of light, that you may be assisted in judging

* 1 Thess iii. 10. † 2 Thess. i. 11. ‡ John xiv. 21, 23.

‖ N. B. This chapter is almost an abridgment of that excellent book of Dr. Evans, intitled, "The Christian Temper," so far as it relates to the description of it. For particular arguments, to enforce each part of this temper, I must refer the reader to the book itself.

of what you are, and what you ought to be. And in this I aim, not only at your conviction, if you are yet a stranger to real religion, but at your farther edification if by the grace of God you are by this time experimentally acquainted with it. Happy you will be, happy beyond expression, if as you go on from one article to another, you can say, "this is my temper and character." Happy in no inconsiderable degree, if you can say, "this is what I desire, what I pray for, and what I pursue, in preference to every opposite view, though it be not what I have as yet attained."

§. 2. Search then, and try, *what manner of spirit you are of**. And may he that searcheth all hearts direct the enquiry, and enable you *so to judge yourself, that you may not be condemned of the Lord*†!

§. 3. Know in the general, that if you are a christian indeed, you have been *renewed in the spirit of your mind*‡; so renewed, as to be regenerated and born again. It is not enough, to have assumed a new name, to have been brought under some new restraints, or to have made a partial change in some particulars of your conduct. The change must be great and universal. Enquire then whether you have entertained new apprehensions of things, have formed a practical judgment different from what you formerly did; whether the ends you propose, the affections which you feel working in your heart, and the course of action to which, by those affections, you are directed, be on the whole new or old‖? Again, If you are a christian indeed, you are *partaker of a divine nature* §; divine in its original, its tendency, and its resemblance. Enquire therefore, whether God hath implanted a principle in your heart, which tends to him, and which makes you like him. Search your soul attentively, to see if you have really the image there of God's moral perfections, of his holiness and righteousness, his goodness and fidelity, for *the new man is after God created in righteousness, and true holiness*¶, and *is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him***.

§. 4. For your farther assistance enquire whether *the same mind be in you which was also in Christ*††; whether you bear the image of God's incarnate Son, the brightest and fairest resem-

* Luke ix. 55. † 1 Cor xi. 31, 32. ‡ Eph. iv. 23. § 2 Pet. i. 4.
¶ Eph. iv. 24. ** Col. iii. 10. †† Phil. ii. 5.

‖ The reader may see those thoughts illustrated at large, in the three first of my "Sermons on Regeneration.

blance of the Father, which earth or heaven ever beheld. The blessed Jesus designed himself to be a model for all his followers; and he is certainly a model most fit for our imitation: an example in our own nature, and in circumstances adapted to general use; an example, recommended to us at once by its spotless perfection, and by the endearing relation in which he stands to us, as our master, our friend, and our head; as the person by whom our everlasting state is to be fixed, and in a resemblance to whom our final happiness is to consist, if ever we are happy at all. Look then into the life and temper of Christ, as described and illustrated in the gospels, and search whether you can find any thing like it in your own life. Have you any thing of his devotion, love, and resignation to God? Any thing of his humility, meekness, and benevolence to men? Any thing of his purity and wisdom, his contempt of the world, his patience, his fortitude, his zeal? And indeed all the other branches of the christian temper, which do not imply previous guilt in the person by whom they are exercised, may be called in to illustrate and assist your enquiries under this head.

§. 5. Let me add, "If you are a christian, you are in the main spiritually minded, as knowing, that is life and peace, whereas *to be carnally minded is death**. Though you live in the flesh, you *will not war after it*†; you will not take your orders, and your commands from it. You will indeed attend to its necessary interest, as matter of duty; but it will still be with regard to another and a nobler interest, that of the rational and immortal spirit. Your thoughts, your affections, your pursuits, your choice, will be determined by a regard to things spiritual rather than carnal.—In a word, you will *walk by faith and not by sight*‡. Future, invisible, and in some degree incomprehensible objects, will take up your mind. Your faith will act on the being of God, his perfections, his providence, his precepts, his threatenings, and his promises. It will act upon Christ, *whom having not seen, you will love and honour*‖. It will act on that unseen world, which it knows to be eternal, and therefore infinitely more worthy of your affectionate regard, than any of *those things which are seen and are temporal*¶.

§. 6. These are general views of the christian temper, on which I would intreat you to examine yourself: and now I would go on to lead you into a survey of the grand branches

* Rom. viii. 6. † 2 Cor. x. 3. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 7.
‖ 1 Pet. i. 8. ¶ 2 Cor. iv. 18.

of it, as relating to God, our neighbour, and ourselves; and of those qualifications, which must attend each of these branches, such as sincerity, constancy, tenderness, zeal, and prudence. And I beg your diligent attention, while I lay before you a few hints with regard to each, by which you may judge the better, both of your state, and your duty.

§. 7. Examine then, I intreat you, "the temper of your heart, with regard to the blessed God." Do you find there a reverential fear, and a supreme love and veneration for his incomparable excellencies, a desire after him as the highest good, and a cordial gratitude towards him as your supreme benefactor? Can you trust his care? Can you credit his testimony? Do you desire to pay an unreserved obedience to all that he commands, and an humble submission to all the disposals of his providence? Do you design his glory as your noblest end, and make it the great business of your life to approve yourself to him? Is it your governing care to imitate him, and to *serve him in spirit and in truth* * ?

§. 8. Faith in Christ I have already described at large; and therefore shall say nothing farther, either of that persuasion of his power and grace, which is the great foundation of it; or of that acceptance of Christ under all his characters, or that surrender of the soul into his hands, in which its peculiar and distinguishing nature consists.

§. 9. If this faith in Christ be sincere, "it will undoubtedly produce a love to him;" which will express itself, in affectionate thoughts of him; in strict fidelity to him; in a careful observation of his charge; in a regard to his spirit, to his friends, and to his interests; in a reverence to the memorials of his dying love, which he has instituted; and in an ardent desire after that heavenly world where he dwells, and where he will at length *have all his people to dwell with him* †.

§. 10. I may add, agreeable to the word of God, that thus believing in Christ, and loving him, you will also rejoice in him;" in his glorious design, and in his complete fitness to accomplish it, in the promises of his word, and in the privileges of his people. It will be matter of joy to you, that such a Redeemer has appeared in this world of ours; and your joy for yourselves will be proportionable to the degree of clearness, with which you discern your interest in him, and relation to him.

§. 11. Let me farther lead you into some reflections on "the temper of your heart towards the blessed spirit." If *we have*

* John iv. 24. † John xvii. 24.

*not the spirit of Christ, we are none of his**. If we are not *led by the spirit of God, we are not the children of God*†. You will then, if you are a real christian, desire that you may be *filled with the spirit*‡; that you may have every power of your soul subject to his authority; that his agency on your heart be more constant, more operative, and more delightful. And to cherish these sacred influences, you will often have recourse to serious consideration and meditation: You will abstain from those sins, which tend to grieve him: You will improve the tender seasons, in which he seems to breathe upon your soul: you will strive earnestly with God in prayer, that you may have him shed on you still more *abundantly, through Jesus Christ*§: And you will be desirous to fall in with the great end of his mission, which was *to glorify Christ*‖, and to establish his kingdom.—"You will desire his influences as the spirit of adoption," to render your acts of worship free and affectionate, your obedience vigorous, your sorrow for sin overflowing and tender, your resignation meek, and your love ardent; in a word, to carry you through life and death, with the temper of a child, who delights in his father, and who longs for his more immediate presence.

§. 12. Once more, "if you are a christian indeed, you will be desirous to obtain the spirit of courage." Amidst all that humility of soul to which you will be formed, you will wish to commence a hero in the cause of Christ; opposing with a vigorous resolution the strongest efforts of the powers of darkness, the inward corruption of your own heart, and all the outward difficulties you may meet with in the way of your duty, while in the cause and in the strength of Christ you go on conquering and to conquer.

§. 13. All these things may be considered as branches of godliness; of that godliness, which is profitable unto all things, and hath *the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come*¶.

§. 14. Let me now farther lay before you some branches of the christian temper, "which relate more immediately to ourselves." And here, if you are a christian indeed, "you will undoubtedly prefer the soul to the body, and things eternal to those that are temporal." Conscious of the dignity and value of your immortal part, you will come to a firm resolution to secure its happiness, whatever is to be resigned, whatever is

* Rom. viii. 9. † Rom. viii. 14. ‡ Eph. v. 18.
§ Tit. iii. 6. ‖ John xvi. 14. ¶ 1 Tim. iv. 8.

to be endured in that view.——If you are a real christian, you will be also *clothed with humility**. You will have a deep sense of your own imperfections, both natural and moral; of the short extent of your knowledge; of the uncertainty and weakness of your resolutions; and of your continual dependance upon God, and upon almost every thing about you. And especially, you will be deeply sensible of your guilt; the remembrance of which will fill you with shame and confusion, even when you have some reason to hope it is forgiven. This will forbid all haughtiness and insolence, in your behaviour to your fellow creatures. It will teach you, under afflictive providences, with all holy submission to *bear the indignation of the Lord*, as those that know they *have sinned against him*†.—— Again, if you are a christian indeed, "you will labour after purity of soul," and maintain a fixed abhorrence of all prohibited sensual indulgence. A recollection of past impurities will fill you with shame and grief: and you will endeavour for the future to guard your thoughts and desires, as well as your words and actions, and to *abstain* not only *from* the commission of *evil*, but from the distant *appearance* and probable occasions of it‡; as conscious of the perfect holiness of that God with whom you converse, and of the purifying nature of that hope§, which by his gospel he hath taught you to entertain.

§. 15. With this is nearly allied, "that amiable virtue of temperance," which will teach you to guard against such a use of meats and drinks as indisposes the body for the service of the soul; or such an indulgence in either, as will rob you of that precious jewel, your time, or occasion an expence beyond what your circumstances will admit, and beyond what will consist with those liberalities to the poor, which your relation and theirs to God and each other will require. In short, you will guard against whatever has a tendency to increase a sensual disposition; against whatever would alienate the soul from communion with God, and would diminish its zeal and activity in his service.

§. 16. The divine philosophy of the blessed Jesus will also teach you, "a contented temper." It will moderate your desires of those worldly enjoyments, after which many feel such an insatiable thirst, ever growing with indulgence and success. You will guard against an immoderate care about those things, which would lead you into a forgetfulness of your heavenly inheritance. If providence disappoint your undertakings, you will

* 1 Pet. v. 5. † Micah vii. 9. ‡ 1 Thess. v. 22. § 1 John iii. 3.

submit; if others be more prosperous, you will not envy them; but rather will be thankful for what God is pleased to bestow upon them, as well as for what he gives you. No unlawful methods will be used, to alter your present condition, and whatever it is, you will endeavour to make the best of it; remembering, it is what infinite wisdom and goodness have appointed you, and that it is beyond all comparison better than you have deserved; yea, that the very deficiencies and inconveniences of it may conduce to the improvement of your future and complete happiness.

§. 17. With contentment, if you are a disciple of Christ, "you will join patience too," and *in patience will possess your soul**. You cannot indeed be quite insensible, either of afflictions, or of injuries: but your mind will be calm and composed under them, and steady in the prosecution of proper duty, though afflictions press, and though your hopes, your dearest hopes, and prospects be delayed. Patience will prevent hasty and rash conclusions, and fortify you against seeking irregular methods of relief; disposing you in the mean time, till God shall be pleased to appear for you, to go on steadily in the way of your duty; *committing yourself to him in well doing*†. You will also be careful, that *patience may have its perfect work*‡, and prevail in proportion to those circumstances which demand its peculiar exercise. For instance, when the successions of evil are long and various, so that deep calls to deep, and all God's *waves and billows* seem to be *going over you* one after another§: when God touches you in the most tender part; when the reasons of his conduct to you are quite unaccountable; when your natural spirits are weak and decayed; when unlawful methods of redress seem near and easy; still your reverence for the will of your heavenly Father will carry it against all, and keep you waiting quietly for deliverance in his own time and way.

N.B. If this chapter seem too long to be read at once, it may properly be divided here.

§. 18. I have thus led you into a brief review of the christian temper, with respect to God, and ourselves: permit me now to add, "that the gospel will teach you another set of very important lessons with respect to your fellow-creatures." They are all summed up in this, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*‖; and *whatsoever thou wouldst*, (that is, whatsoever thou couldst in an exchange of circumstances fairly and reasonably desire) *that others should do unto thee, do thou likewise*

* Luke xxi. 19. † 1 Pet. iv. 19. ‡ Jam. i. 4. § Psal. xlii. 7. ‖ Rom. xiii. 9.

*the same unto them.** The religion of the blessed Jesus, when it triumphs in your soul, will conquer the predominancy of an irregular self-love, and will teach you candidly and tenderly to look upon your neighbour as another self. As you are sensible of your own rights, you will be sensible of his; as you support your own character, you will support his. You will desire his welfare, and be ready to relieve his necessity, as you would have your own consulted by another. You will put the kindest construction upon his dubious words and actions. You will take pleasure in his happiness, you will feel his distress, in some measure as your own. And most happy will you be, when this obvious rule is familiar to your mind, when this golden law is written upon your heart; and when it is habitually and impartially consulted by you, upon every occasion, whether great or small.

§. 19. The gospel will also teach you, *to put on meekness*†, not only with respect to God, submitting to the authority of his word, and the disposal of his providence, as was urged before; but also with regard to your brethren of mankind. Its gentle instructions will form you to calmness of temper under injuries and provocations, so that you may not be angry without, or beyond just cause. It will engage you to guard your words, lest you provoke and exasperate those, you should rather study by love to gain, and by tenderness to heal. Meekness will render you slow in using any rough and violent methods, if they can by any means be lawfully avoided; and ready to admit, and even to propose a reconciliation, after they have been entered into, if there may be hope of succeeding. So far as this branch of the christian temper prevails in your heart, you will take care to avoid every thing which might give unnecessary offence to others; you will behave yourself in a modest manner, according to your station; and it will work, both with regard to superiors and inferiors; teaching you duly to honour the one, and not to overbear or overpress, to grieve or insult the other. And in religion itself it will restrain all immoderate sallies and harsh censures; and will command down that *wrath of man, which instead of working*, so often opposes *the righteousness of God*,‡ and shames and wounds that good cause, in which it is boisterously and furiously engaged.

§. 20. With this is naturally connected "a peaceful disposition." If you are a christian indeed, you will have such a

* Mat. vii. 12. † Col. iii. 12. ‡ James i. 20.

value and esteem for peace, as to endeavour to obtain, and to preserve it *as much as lieth in you**, as much as you fairly and honourably can. This will have such an influence upon your conduct, as to make you not only cautious of giving offence, and slow in taking it, but earnestly desirous to regain peace as soon as may be, when it is in any measure broken; that the wound may be healed, while it is green, and before it begins to rankle and fester. And more especially this disposition will engage you, *to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*†, *with all that in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*‡; whom if you truly love, you will also love all those, whom you have reason to believe to be his disciples and servants.

§. 21. If you be yourselves indeed of that number, *you will also put on bowels of mercy*§. The mercies of God, and those of the blessed Redeemer, will work on your heart, to mould it to sentiments of compassion and generosity, so that you will feel the wants and sorrows of others; you will desire to relieve their necessities, and, as you have an opportunity, you will do good, both to their bodies and their souls; expressing your kind affections in suitable actions, which may both evidence their sincerity, and render them effectual.

§. 22. As a christian, "you will also maintain truth inviolable," not only in your solemn testimonies, when confirmed by an oath, but likewise in common conversation. You will remember too, that your promises bring an obligation upon you, which you are by no means at liberty to break through. On the whole, you will be careful to keep a strict correspondence between your words and your actions, in such a manner as becomes a servant of the God of truth.

§. 23. Once more. As amidst the strictest care to observe all the divine precepts, you will still find many imperfections on account of which you will be obliged to pray that God *would not enter into strict judgment with you, as well knowing that in his sight you cannot be justified*‖; you will be careful not to judge others, in such a manner as should awaken the severity of *his judgment against yourself*¶. You will not, therefore, judge them pragmatically, that is, when you have nothing to do with their actions; nor rashly, without enquiring into circumstances; nor partially, without weighing them attentively and fairly; nor uncharitably, putting the worst construction upon things in their own nature dubious, deciding upon inten-

* Rom. xii. 18. † Eph. iv. 3. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 2.
§ Col. iii. 12. ‖ Psal. cxliii. 2. ¶ Mat. vii. 1, 2.

tions as evil farther than they certainly appear to be so; pronouncing on the state of men, or on the whole of their character from any particular action, and involving the innocent with the guilty. There is a moderation contrary to all these extremes, which the gospel recommends; and if you receive the gospel in good earnest into your heart, it will lay the axe to the root of such evils as these.

§. 24. Having thus briefly illustrated the principal branches of the christian temper and character, I shall conclude the representation, with reminding you of "some general qualifications, which must be mingled with all, and give a tincture to each of them; such as, sincerity, tenderness, zeal, and prudence."

§. 25. Always remember, "that sincerity is the very soul of true religion." A single intention to please God, and to approve ourselves to him, must animate and govern all that we do in it. Under the influence of this principle you will impartially enquire into every intimation of duty, and apply to the practice of it so far as it is known to you. Your heart will be engaged in all you do. Your conduct in private and in secret, will be agreeable to your most public behaviour. A sense of the divine authority will teach you, to *esteem all God's precepts concerning all things to be right, and to hate every false way**.

§. 26. Thus are you *in simplicity and godly sincerity to have your conversation in the world*†. And you are also to charge it upon your soul, to *be stedfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*‡. There must not only be some sudden fits and starts of devotion, or of something which looks like it, but religion must be an habitual and permanent thing. There must be a purpose to adhere to it at all times. It must be made the stated and ordinary business of life. Deliberate and presumptuous sins must be carefully avoided; a guard must be maintained against the common infirmities of life; and falls of one kind or of another, must be matter of proportionable humiliation before God, and must occasion renewed resolution for his service. And thus you are to go on to the end of your life, not discouraged by the length and difficulty of the way, nor allured on the one hand, or terrified on the other, by all the various temptations which may surround and assault you. Your soul must be fixed on this basis, and you are still to behave yourself as one who knows he serves an unchangeable God, and who expects from him *a kingdom which cannot be moved*‖.

* Psal. cxix. 128. † 2 Cor. i. 12. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 58. ‖ Heb. xii. 28.

§. 27. Again. So far as the gospel prevails in your heart, "your spirit will be tender, and the stone will be transformed into flesh." You will desire, that your apprehension of divine things may be quick, your affections ready to take proper impressions, your conscience always easily touched, and on the whole, your resolutions pliant to the divine authority, and cordially willing to be, and to do, whatever God shall appoint. You will have a tender regard to the word of God, a tender caution against sin, a tender guard against the snares of prosperity, a tender submission to God's afflicting hand: in a word, you will be tender wherever the divine honour is concerned; and careful, neither to do any thing yourself, nor to allow any thing in another, so far as you can influence, by which God should be offended, or religion reproached.

§. 28. Nay more than all this, you will, so far as true christianity governs in your mind, "exert an holy zeal in the service of your Redeemer and your Father." You will be *zealously affected in every good thing**, in proportion to its apprehended goodness and importance. You will be zealous, especially, to correct what is irregular in yourselves, and to act to the uttermost of your ability for the cause of God. Nor will you be able to look with an indifferent eye on the conduct of others in this view; but so far as charity, meekness and prudence will admit, you will testify your disapprobation of every thing in it, which is dishonourable to God, and injurious to men. And you will labour, not only to reclaim men from such courses, but to engage them to religion, and to quicken them in it.

§. 29. And once more, you will desire "to use the prudence which God hath given you," in judging what is, in present circumstances, your duty to God, your neighbour and yourself; what will be, on the whole, the most acceptable manner of discharging it, and how far it may be most advantageously pursued; as remembering, that he is indeed the wisest and the happiest man, who by constant attention of thought discovers the greatest opportunity of doing good, and with ardent and animated resolution breaks through every opposition, that he may improve those opportunities.

§. 30. This is such a view of the christian temper, as could conveniently be thrown within such narrow limits; and I hope, it may assist many in the great and important work of self-examination. Let your own conscience answer, how far

* Gal. iv. 18.

you have already attained it, and how far you desire it; and let the principal topics here touched upon be fixed in your memory and in your heart, that you may be mentioning them before God in your daily addresses to the throne of grace, in order to receive from him all necessary assistances for bringing them into practice.

A Prayer, chiefly in Scripture Language, in which the several Branches of the Christian Temper are more briefly enumerated in the Order laid down above.

"BLESSED God, I humbly adore thee, as the great *Father of lights, and the giver of every good and every perfect gift**. From thee therefore I seek every blessing, and especially those, which lead me to thyself, and prepare me for the eternal enjoyment of thee. I adore thee, as the God who *searches the hearts, and tries the reins of the children of men*†. *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts: see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*‡. May I know *what manner of spirit I am of* ‖, and be preserved from mistaking, where the error might be infinitely fatal!

"May I, O Lord, be *renewed in the spirit of my mind* §! *A new heart do thou give me, and a new spirit do thou put within me* ¶! Make me *partaker of a divine nature* **; and *as he who hath called me is holy, may I be holy in all manner of conversation*††. May *the same mind be in me, which was in Christ Jesus*‡‡; may I *so walk even as he walked*‖‖ Deliver me from being *carnally minded, which is death*; and make me *spiritually minded*, since that *is life and peace* §§! And may I, while I pass through this world of sense, *walk by faith, and not by sight*¶¶; and be *strong in faith giving glory to God****.

May thy grace, O Lord, which hath appeared unto all men, and appeared to me, with such glorious evidence and lustre, effectually *teach me to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly*†††! Work in my heart that *godliness which is profitable unto all things*‡‡‡; and teach me by the influence of thy blessed Spirit, to *love thee the Lord my God, with all my heart, and with all my*

* James i. 17. † Jer. xvii. 10. ‡ Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24. ‖ Luke ix. 55.
§ Eph. iv 23. ¶ Ezek. xxxvi. 26. ** 2 Pet. i. 4. †† 1 Pet. i. 15.
‡‡ Phil. ii. 5. ‖‖ 1 John ii. 6. §§ Rom. viii. 6. ¶¶ 2 Cor. v. 7.
*** Rom. iv. 20. ††† Tit. ii. 11, 12. ‡‡‡ 1 Tim. iv. 8.

*soul, and with all my mind, and with all my strength**! May I *yield myself unto thee, as alive from the dead*†; and *present my body a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable in thy sight, which is my most reasonable service*‡! May I entertain the most faithful and affectionate regards to the blessed Jesus, thine incarnate Son, *the brightness of thy glory, and the express image of thy person*‖! Though I have not seen him, may I love him; and in him, though now I see him not, yet believing, may I *rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*§: and may *the life which I live in the flesh, be daily by the faith of the Son of God*¶! May I *be filled with the spirit*** ; and may I *be led by it*†† ; and so may it be evident to others, and especially to my own soul, that I am a child of God, and an heir of glory! May I *not receive the spirit of bondage unto fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby* I may be enabled to *cry Abba, Father*‡‡! May he work in me as *the spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind*‖‖; that so I may *add to my faith, virtue*§§! May I *be strong, and very courageous*¶¶, and *quit myself like a man****, and like a christian, in the work to which I am called, and in that warfare which I had in view, when I listed under the banner of the great captain of my salvation!

"Teach me, O Lord, seriously to consider the nature of my own soul, and to set a suitable value upon it! May I labour, not only, or chiefly, *for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to eternal life*†††! May I humble myself under thy mighty hand, and be *clothed with humility*‡‡‡: decked with *the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price*‖‖‖! May I be *pure in heart*, that I may *see God*§§§; *mortifying my members which are on the earth*¶¶¶, so that *if a right eye offend me, I may pluck it out, and if a right hand offend me, I may cut it off*****! May I *be temperate in all things*††††, *content with such things as I have*‡‡‡‡! and instructed to be so *in whatsoever state I am*‖‖‖‖! May *patience* also *have its perfect work* in me, that I may be in that respect *complete, and wanting nothing*§§§§.

"Form me, O Lord I beseech thee, to a proper temper towards my fellow-creatures! May I *love my neighbour as my-*

* Mark xii. 30. † Rom. vi. 13. ‡ Rom. xii. 1. ‖ Heb. i. 3.
§ 1 Pet. i. 8. ¶ Gal. ii. 20. ** Eph. v. 18. †† Rom. viii. 14.
‡‡ Rom. viii. 15. ‖‖ 2 Tim. i. 7. §§ 2 Pet. i. 5. ¶¶ Josh. i. 7.
*** 1 Cor. xvi. 13. ††† John vi. 27. ‡‡‡ 1 Pet. v. 5, 6. ‖‖‖ 1 Pet. iii. 4.
§§§ Mat. v. 8. ¶¶¶ Col. iii. 5. **** Mat. v. 29, 30. †††† 1 Cor. ix. 25.
‡‡‡‡ Heb. xiii. 5. ‖‖‖‖ Phil. iv. 11. §§§§ Jam. i. 4.

self:* and *whatsoever I would that others should do unto me,* may I also *do the same unto them†!* May I *put on meekness‡* under the greatest injuries and provocations; and *if it be possible, as much as lieth in me,* may I *live peaceably with all men‖!* May I be *merciful as my Father in heaven is merciful§!* May I *speak the truth from my heart¶;* and may I *speak it in love**;* guarding against every instance of a censorious and malignant disposition; and taking care not to judge severely *as I would not be judged††* with a severity which thou, Lord, knowest, and which mine own conscience knows, I should not be able to support!

"I intreat thee, O Lord, to work in me all those qualifications of the christian temper, which may render it peculiarly acceptable to thee, and may prove ornamental to my profession in the world. Renew, I beseech thee, *a right spirit within me‡‡;* make me *an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no* allowed *guile‖‖!* And while I feast on Christ, as my passover sacrificed for me, may I *keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth§§!* Make me, I beseech thee, O thou almighty and unchangeable God, *stedfast and immovable, always abounding in thy work, as knowing that my labour in the Lord shall not be* finally *in vain¶¶!* May my *heart be tender***,* easily impressed with thy word and providence, touched with an affectionate concern for thy glory, and sensible of every impulse of thy spirit! May I be *zealous for my God,†††* with a *zeal according to knowledge‡‡‡* and *charity‖‖‖;* and teach me in thy service to join *the wisdom of the serpent§§§* with the boldness of the lion, and the innocence of the dove! Thus render me, by thy grace, a shining image of my dear Redeemer; and at length bring me to wear the bright resemblance of his holiness and his glory, in that world where he dwells; that I may ascribe everlasting honours to him, and to thee, O thou Father of mercies, whose invaluable gift he is, and to thine holy spirit, through whose gracious influences I would humbly hope, I may call thee my Father, and Jesus my Saviour! Amen."

* Gal. v. 14. † Mat. vii. 12. ‡ Col. iii. 12. ‖ Rom. xii. 18.
§ Luke vi. 36. ¶ Psal. xv. 2. ** Eph. iv. 15. †† Mat. vii. 1.
‡‡ Psal. li. 10. ‖‖‖ John i. 47. §§ 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. ¶¶ 1 Cor. xv. 58.
*** 2 Kings xxii. 19. ††† Numb. xxv. 13. ‡‡‡ Rom. x. 2. ‖‖‖ 1 Cor. xvi. 14.
§§§ Mat. x. 16.

CHAP. XV.

The Reader reminded how much he needs the Assistance of the Spirit of God, to form him to the Temper described above, and what Encouragement he has to expect it.

Forward Resolutions may prove ineffectual: §. 1. Yet Religion is not to be given up in Despair, but divine Grace sought, §. 2. A general View of its Reality and Necessity, from Reason, §. 3. And Scripture, §. 4. The Spirit to be sought as the Spirit of Christ, §. 5. And in that View, the great Strength of the Soul, §. 6. The Encouragement there is to hope for the Communication of it, §. 7. A concluding Exhortation to pray for it: §. 8. And an humble Address to God, pursuant to that Exhortation.

§. 1. I HAVE now laid before you a plan of that temper and character, which the gospel requires, and which, if you are a true christian, you will desire and pursue. Surely there is in the very description of it something which must powerfully strike every mind, which has any taste for what is truly beautiful and excellent. And I question not, but you my dear reader, will feel some impression of it upon your heart. You will immediately form some lively purpose of endeavouring after it; and perhaps you may imagine, you shall certainly and quickly attain to it. You see how reasonable it is, and what desirable consequences necessarily attends it, and the aspect which it bears on your present enjoyment and your future happiness; and therefore are determined you will act accordingly. But give me leave seriously to remind you, how many there have been (would to God that several of the instances had not happened within the compass of my own personal observation!) whose goodness hath been *like a morning cloud, and the early dew, which soon passeth away**. There is not room indeed absolutely to apply the words of Joshua, taken in the most rigorous sense, when he said to Israel, (that he might humble their too hasty and sanguine resolutions,) *You cannot serve the Lord*†. But I will venture to say, you cannot easily do it. Alas, you know not the difficulties you have to break through; you know not the temptations which satan will throw in your way; you know not how importunate your vain and sinful companions will be, to draw you back into the snare you may attempt to break; and above all, you know not the subtile artifices which your own corruptions will practise upon you, in order to recover their dominion over you. You think the views you now

* Hos. vi. 4. † Josh. xxiv. 19.

have of things will be lasting, because the principles and objects to which they refer are so: but perhaps to-morrow may undeceive you, or rather deceive you anew. To-morrow may present some trifle in a new dress, which shall amuse you into a forgetfulness of all this. Nay, perhaps, before you lie down on your bed, the impressions you now feel may wear off. The corrupt desires of your own heart, now perhaps a little charmed down, and lying as if they were dead, may spring up again with new violence, as if they had slept only to recruit their vigour; and if you are not supported by a better strength than your own, this struggle for liberty will only make your future chains the heavier, the more shameful, and the more fatal.

§. 2. What then is to be done? Is the convinced sinner to lie down in despair? to say, "I am an helpless captive, and by exerting myself with violence may break my limbs sooner than my bonds, and increase the evil I would remove." God forbid! You cannot, I am persuaded, be so little acquainted with christianity, as not to know, "that the doctrine of divine assistances bears a very considerable part in it. You have often, I doubt not, read of *the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, as making us free from the law of sin and death**; and have been told, that *through the spirit, we mortify the deeds of the body* †; you have read of *doing all things* through Christ who strengtheneth us‡; whose grace is sufficient for us, and whose strength *is made perfect in weakness* §: permit me, therefore, now to call down your attention to this, as a truth of the clearest evidence, and the utmost importance.

§. 3. Reason indeed, as well as the whole tenor of scripture, agrees with this‖. The whole created world has a necessary dependence on God: from him even the knowledge of *natural things*¶ is derived, and *skill in them*** is to be ascribed to him. Much more loudly does so great and excellent a work, as the new-forming the human mind, bespeak its divine author. When you consider how various the branches of the christian temper are, and how contrary many of them also are to that temper which hath prevailed in your heart, and governed your life in time past; you must really see divine influences as necessary to produce and nourish them, as the influences of the sun and rain are to call up the variety of plants and flowers, and

* Rom. viii. 2. † Rom. viii. 13. ‡ Phil. iv. 13.
§ 2 Cor. xii. 9. ¶ Psal. xciv. 10. ** Exod. xxxi. 3—6.

‖ See many of these thoughts much more largely illustrated in my VIIth Sermon on Regeneration.

grain and fruits, by which the earth is adorned, and our life supported. You will yet be more sensible of this, if you reflect on the violent opposition which this happy work must expect to meet with, of which I shall presently warn you more largely, and which if you have not already experienced, it must be because you have but very lately begun to think of religion.

§. 4. Accordingly, if you give yourself leave to consult scripture on this head, (and if you would live like a christian, you must be consulting it every day, and forming your notions and actions by it;) you will see, that the whole tenor of it teaches that dependence upon God, which I am now recommending. You will particularly see, that the production of religion in the soul is matter of divine promise; that when it has been effected, scripture ascribes it to a divine agency; and that the increase of grace and piety in the heart of those who are truly regenerate, is also spoken of as the work of God, who *begins and carries it on until the day of Jesus Christ**.

§. 5. In consequence of all these views, lay it down to yourself as a most certain principle, "that no attempt in religion is to be made in your own strength." If you forget this, and God purposes finally to save you, he will humble you by repeated disappointments till he teach you better. You will be ashamed of one scheme and effort, and of another, till you settle upon the true basis. He will also probably shew you, not only in the general, that your strength is to be derived from heaven; but particularly, that it is the office of the blessed spirit, to purify the heart, and to invigorate holy resolutions; and also, that in all these operations he is to be considered as the spirit of Christ, working under his direction, and as a vital communication from him, under the character of the great head of the church, the grand treasurer and dispenser of these holy and beneficial influences. On which account it is called the *supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ*†, who is *exalted at the right hand of the Father, to give repentance and remission of sins*‡; *in whose grace alone we can be strong*‖ and *of whose fulness we receive, even grace for grace.*§

§. 6. Resolve therefore strenuously for the service of God, and for the care of your soul; but resolve modestly and humbly. *Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men utterly fall; but they who wait on the Lord*, are the persons who *renew their strength*¶. When a soul is almost

* Phil. i. 6. † Phil. i. 19. ‡ Acts v. 31.
‖ 2 Tim ii. 1. § John i. 16. ¶ Isai. xl. 30, 31.

afraid to declare in the presence of the Lord, that it will not do this, or that, which has formerly offended him; when it is afraid absolutely to promise, that it will perform this, or that duty, with vigour and constancy; but only expresses its humble earnest desire, that it may by grace be enabled to avoid the one, or pursue the other; then so far as my observation and experience have reached, it is in the best way to learn the happy art of conquering temptation, and of discharging duty.

§. 7. On the other hand, let not your dependence upon this spirit, and your sense of your own weakness and insufficiency for any thing spiritually good without his continual aid, discourage you from devoting yourself to God, and engaging in a religious life, considering "what abundant reason you have to hope, that these gracious influences will be communicated to you."—The light of nature, at the same time that it teaches the need we have of help from God in a virtuous course, may lead us to conclude, that so benevolent a being, who bestows on the most unworthy and careless part of mankind so many blessings, will take a peculiar pleasure in communicating to such as humbly ask them, those gracious assistances, which may form their deathless souls into his own resemblance, and fit them for that happiness to which their rational nature is suited, and for which it was in its first constitution intended.—The word of God will much more abundantly confirm such an hope. You there hear divine wisdom crying even to those who had long trifled with her instructions, *Turn ye at my reproof, and I will pour out my spirit upon you**. You hear the apostle saying, *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need*†. Yea, you there hear our Lord himself, arguing in this sweet and convincing manner; *If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his holy spirit unto them that ask him*‡? This gift and promise of the spirit was given unto Christ, when he ascended up on high, in trust for all his true disciples. God hath *shed it abroad abundanly upon us in him*‖. And I may add, that the very desire you feel after the farther communication of the Spirit, is the result of the first-fruits of it already given: so that you may with peculiar propriety interpret it as a special call, to open *your mouth wide, that he may fill it*§. You thirst, and therefore you may cheerfully plead, that Jesus hath invited you to come

* Pov. i. 23. † Heb. iv. 16. ‡ Luke xi. 13. ‖ Tit. iii. 6. § Psal. lxxxi. 10.

unto him and drink; with a promise, not only that you shall drink if you come unto him, but also that *out of your belly shall flow*, as it were, *rivers of living water**, for the edification and refreshment of others.

§. 8. Go forth therefore, with humble cheerfulness, to the prosecution of all the duties of the christian life. Go, and prosper, in the strength of the Lord, making *mention of his righteousness, and of his only*†. And as a token of farther communications, may your heart be quickened to the most earnest desire, after the blessings I have now been recommending to your pursuit! May you be stirred up to pour out your soul before God, in such holy breathings as these! and may they be your daily language in his gracious presence.

An humble Supplication for the Influences of Divine Grace, to form and strengthen Religion in the Soul.

"BLESSED God! I sincerely acknowledge before thee, mine own weakness and insufficiency for any thing that is spiritually good. I have experienced it a thousand times; and yet my foolish heart would again *trust itself*‡, and form resolutions in its own strength. But let this be the first-fruits of thy gracious influence upon it, to bring it to an humble distrust of itself, and to a repose on thee!

"Abundantly do I rejoice, O Lord, in the kind assurances which thou givest me of thy readiness to bestow liberally and richly so great a benefit. I do therefore, according to thy condescending invitation, *come with boldness to the throne of grace, that I may find grace to help in every time of need*§. I mean not, O Lord God, to *turn thy grace into wantonness*, or perverseness‖, or to make my weakness an excuse for negligence and sloth. I confess thou hast already given me more strength than I have used; and I charge it upon myself, and not on thee, that I have not long since received still more abundant supplies. I desire for the future to be found diligent in the use of all appointed means; in the neglect of which, I well know, that petitions like these would be a profane mockery, and might much more probably provoke thee to take away what I have, than prevail upon thee to impart more. But firmly resolving to exert myself to the utmost, I earnestly intreat the communications of thy grace, that I may be enabled to fulfil that resolution.

* John vii. 37, 38. † Psal. lxxi. 16. ‡ Prov. xxviii. 26.
§ Heb. iv. 16. ‖ Jude, ver. 4.

"*Be surety, O Lord, unto thy servant for good**!* Be pleased to shed abroad thy sanctifying influences on my soul, to form me for every duty thou requirest! Implant, I beseech thee, every grace and virtue deep in mine heart; and maintain the happy temper in the midst of those assaults, from within and from without, to which I am continually liable, while I am still in this world, and carry about with me so many infirmities! Fill my breast, I beseech thee, with good affections towards thee, my God, and towards my fellow-creatures! Remind me always of thy presence; and may I remember, that every secret sentiment of my soul is open to thee! May I therefore guard against the first risings of sin, and the first approaches to it! And that satan may not find room for his evil suggestions, I earnestly beg thou, Lord, wouldst fill my heart by thine Holy Spirit, and take up thy residence there! *Dwell in me, and walk with me*†; and let *my body be the temple of the Holy Ghost*‡!

"May I be so *joined to Christ Jesus my Lord, as to be one spirit with him*‖, and feel his invigorating influences continually bearing me on, superior to every temptation, and to every corruption! That while *the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men utterly fall*, I may so *wait upon the Lord*, as to *renew my strength*§; and may go on from one degree of faith, and love, and zeal, and holiness, to another, till I *appear perfect before thee in Zion*¶, to drink in immortal vigour and joy, from thee, as the everlasting fountain of both, through Jesus Christ my Lord, *in whom I have righteousness and strength***, and to whom I desire ever to ascribe the praise of all mine improvements in both! Amen."

* Psal. cxix. 122. † 2 Cor. vi. 16. ‡ 1 Cor. vi. 19. ‖ 1 Cor. vi. 17.
§ Isai. xl. 30, 31. ¶ Psal. lxxxiv. 7. ** Isai. xlv. 24.

CHAP. XVI.

The Christian Convert warned of, and animated against, those Discouragements which he must expect to meet with, when entering on a religious Course.

Christ has instructed his Disciples to expect opposition and Difficulties in the Way to Heaven, §. 1. Therefore, [I.] A more particular View of them is taken, as arising, (1.) From the Remainders of indwelling Sin, §. 2. (2.) From the World, and especially from former sinful Companions, §. 3. (3.) From the Temptations and Suggestions of Satan, §. 4. [II.] The Christian is animated and encouraged by various Considerations to oppose them; particularly, by—the Presence of God,—the Aids of Christ,—the Example of others, who though feeble have conquered,—and the Crown of Glory to be expected, §. 5, 6. Therefore, though Apostacy would be infinitely fatal, the Christian may press on cheerfully, §. 7. Accordingly the Soul alarmed by these Views, is represented as committing itself to God, in the Prayer which concludes the Chapter.

§. 1. WITH the utmost propriety has our divine master required us to *strive to enter in at the straight gate**; thereby (as it seems) intimating, not only that the passage is narrow, but that it is beset with enemies; beset on the right-hand, and on the left, with enemies cunning and formidable. And be assured, O reader, that whatever your circumstances in life are, you must meet and encounter them. It will therefore be your prudence, to survey them attentively in your own reflections, that you may see what you are to expect; and may consider in what armour it is necessary you should be clothed, and with what weapons you must be furnished to manage the combat. You have often heard them marshalled, as it were, under three great leaders, the flesh, the world, and the devil; and according to this distribution, I would call you to consider the forces of each, as setting themselves in array against you. Oh that you may be excited to *take to yourself the whole armour of God*†, and to *acquit yourself like a man* and a christian ‡!

§. 2. Let your conscience answer, whether you do not carry about with you a corrupt, and degenerate nature? You will I doubt not, feel its effects. You will feel, in the language of the apostle, (who speaks of it as the case of christians themselves,) *the flesh lusting against the spirit, so that you will not be able*, in all instances, *to do the things that you would*‖. You brought irregular propensities into the world along with you; and you have so often indulged those

* Luke xiii. 23, 24. † Eph. vi. 13. ‡ 1 Cor. xvi. 13. ‖ Gal. v. 17.

sinful inclinations, that you have greatly increased their strength; and you will find in consequence of it, that these habits cannot be broke through without great difficulty. You will, no doubt, often recollect the strong figures, in which the prophet describes a case like yours; and you will own, that it is justly represented by that of an *Ethiopian changing his skin, and the leopard his spots* *. It is indeed possible, that you may find such an edge and eagerness upon your spirits, as may lead you to imagine that all opposition will immediately fall before you. But alas, I fear, that in a little time these enemies which seemed to be slain at your feet, will revive, and recover their weapons, and renew the assault in one form or another. And perhaps your most painful combats may be with such as you had thought most easy to be vanquished, and your greatest danger may arise from some of those enemies from whom you apprehended the least; particularly from pride, and from indolence of spirit; from a secret alienation of heart from God, and from an indisposition for conversing with him, through an immoderate attachment to things seen and temporal, which may be oftentimes exceeding dangerous to your salvation, though perhaps they be not absolutely and universally prohibited. In a thousand of these instances, you must learn to deny yourself, or you *cannot be Christ's disciple*†.

§. 3. You must also lay your account, to find great difficulties from the world; from its manners, customs, and examples. The things of the world will hinder you one way, and the men of the world another. Perhaps you may meet with much less assistance in religion, than you are now ready to expect from good men. The present generation of them is generally so cautious to avoid every thing that looks like ostentation, and there seems something so insupportably dreadful in the charge of enthusiasm, that you will find most of your christian brethren studying to conceal their virtue and their piety, much more than others study to conceal their vices and their profaneness. But while, unless your situation be singularly happy, you meet with very little aid one way, you will, no doubt, find great opposition another. The enemies of religion will be bold and active in their assaults, while many of its friends seem unconcerned: and one sinner will probably exert himself more to corrupt you, than ten christians to secure and save you. They who have been once your companions in sin, will try a

* Jer. xiii. 23. † Mat. xvi. 24.

thousand artful methods to allure you back again to their forsaken society: some of them perhaps, with an appearance of tender fondness; and many more by the almost irresistible art of banter and ridicule: that boasted test of right and wrong, as it has been wantonly called, will be tried upon you, perhaps without any regard to decency, or even to common humanity. You will be derided and insulted by those, whose esteem and affection you naturally desire; and may find much more propriety than you imagine, in that expression of the apostle, the *trial of cruel mockings**, which some fear more than either sword or flames. This persecution of the tongue you must expect to go through, and perhaps may be branded as a lunatic, for no other cause, than that you now begin to exercise your reason to purpose, and will not join with those that are destroying their own souls, in their wild career of folly and madness.

§. 4. And it is not at all improbable, that in the mean time satan may be doing his utmost to discourage and distress you. He will, no doubt, raise in your imagination the most tempting idea of the gratifications, the indulgence, and the companions, you are obliged to forsake; and give you the most discouraging and terrifying view of the difficulties, severities, and dangers, which are (as he will persuade you) inseparable from religion. He will not fail to represent God himself, the fountain of goodness and happiness, as an hard master, whom it is impossible to please. He will perhaps fill you with the most distressful fears, and with cruel and insolent malice glory over you as his slave, when he knows you are the Lord's freeman. At one time he will study by his vile suggestions to interrupt you in your duties, as if they gave him an additional power over you. At another time he will endeavour to weary you of your devotion, by influencing you to prolong it to an immoderate and tedious length, lest his power should be exerted upon you when it ceases. In short, this practised deceiver has artifices, which it would require whole volumes to display, with particular cautions against each. And he will follow you with malicious arts and pursuits to the very end of your pilgrimage; and will leave no method unattempted, which may be likely to weaken your hands, and to sadden your heart, that if through the gracious interposition of God, he cannot prevent your final happiness, he may at least impair your peace and your usefulness, as you are passing to it.

§. 5. This is what the people of God feel; and what you

* Heb. xi. 36.

will feel in some degree or other, if you have your lot and your portion among them. But after all be not discouraged: Christ is the *captain of your salvation**. It is delightful to consider him, under this view. When we take a survey of these hosts of enemies, we may lift up our head amidst them all, and say, *more* and *greater, is he that is with us, than all those that are against us*†. *Trust in the Lord, and you will be like mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever*‡. When your enemies press upon you, remember you are to *fight in the presence of God*§. Endeavour therefore to act a gallant and a resolute part; endeavour to *resist them stedfast in the faith*‖. Remember, he can *give power to the faint, and increase strength to them that have no might*¶. He hath done it in ten thousand instances already; and he will do it in ten thousand more. How many striplings have conquered their gigantic foes in all their most formidable armour, when they have gone forth against them, though but as it were *with a staff and a sling, in the name of the Lord God of Israel***! How many women and children have trodden down the force of the enemy, *and out of weakness have been made strong*††!

§. 6. Amidst all the opposition of earth and hell, look upward, and look forward, and you will feel your heart animated by the view. Your general is near: he is near to aid you: he is near to reward you: when you feel the temptation press the hardest, think of him who endured even the cross itself for your rescue. View the fortitude of your divine leader, and endeavour to march on in his steps. Hearken to his voice, for he proclaims it aloud, *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me*‡‡: *be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life* §§. And Oh how bright will it shine! and how long will its lustre last! When the gems that adorn the crowns of monarchs, and pass (instructive thought!) from one royal head to another through succeeding centuries, are melted down in the last flame, it is *a crown of glory which fadeth not away*‖‖!

§. 7. It is indeed true, that *such as turn aside to crooked paths, will be led forth with the workers of iniquity*¶¶ to that terrible execution, which the divine justice is preparing for them; and that it would have been *better for them, not to have known the way of righteousness, than after having known it,*

* Heb. ii. 10. † 2 Kings vi. 16. ‡ Psal. cxxv. 1. § Zech. x. 5.
‖ 1 Pet. v. 9. ¶ Isai. xl. 29. ** 1 Sam. xvii. 40—45. †† Heb. xi 34.
‡‡ Rev. xxii. 12. §§ Rev. ii. 10. ‖‖ 1 Pet. v. 4. ¶¶ Psal. cxxv. 5.

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‖ 1 Pet. v. 9. ¶ Isai. xl. 29. ** 1 Sam. xvii. 40—45. †† Heb. xi 34.
‡‡ Rev. xxii. 12. §§ Rev. ii. 10. ‖‖ 1 Pet. v. 4. ¶¶ Psal. cxxv. 5.

thousand artful methods to allure you back again to their forsaken society: some of them perhaps, with an appearance of tender fondness; and many more by the almost irresistible art of banter and ridicule: that boasted test of right and wrong, as it has been wantonly called, will be tried upon you, perhaps without any regard to decency, or even to common humanity. You will be derided and insulted by those, whose esteem and affection you naturally desire; and may find much more propriety than you imagine, in that expression of the apostle, the *trial of cruel mockings**, which some fear more than either sword or flames. This persecution of the tongue you must expect to go through, and perhaps may be branded as a lunatic, for no other cause, than that you now begin to exercise your reason to purpose, and will not join with those that are destroying their own souls, in their wild career of folly and madness.

§. 4. And it is not at all improbable, that in the mean time satan may be doing his utmost to discourage and distress you. He will, no doubt, raise in your imagination the most tempting idea of the gratifications, the indulgence, and the companions, you are obliged to forsake; and give you the most discouraging and terrifying view of the difficulties, severities, and dangers, which are (as he will persuade you) inseparable from religion. He will not fail to represent God himself, the fountain of goodness and happiness, as an hard master, whom it is impossible to please. He will perhaps fill you with the most distressful fears, and with cruel and insolent malice glory over you as his slave, when he knows you are the Lord's freeman. At one time he will study by his vile suggestions to interrupt you in your duties, as if they gave him an additional power over you. At another time he will endeavour to weary you of your devotion, by influencing you to prolong it to an immoderate and tedious length, lest his power should be exerted upon you when it ceases. In short, this practised deceiver has artifices, which it would require whole volumes to display, with particular cautions against each. And he will follow you with malicious arts and pursuits to the very end of your pilgrimage; and will leave no method unattempted, which may be likely to weaken your hands, and to sadden your heart, that if through the gracious interposition of God, he cannot prevent your final happiness, he may at least impair your peace and your usefulness, as you are passing to it.

§. 5. This is what the people of God feel; and what you

* Heb. xi. 36.

will feel in some degree or other, if you have your lot and your portion among them. But after all be not discouraged: Christ is the *captain of your salvation**. It is delightful to consider him, under this view. When we take a survey of these hosts of enemies, we may lift up our head amidst them all, and say, *more* and *greater, is he that is with us, than all those that are against us*†. *Trust in the Lord, and you will be like mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever*‡. When your enemies press upon you, remember you are to *fight in the presence of God*§. Endeavour therefore to act a gallant and a resolute part; endeavour to *resist them stedfast in the faith*‖. Remember, he can *give power to the faint, and increase strength to them that have no might*¶. He hath done it in ten thousand instances already; and he will do it in ten thousand more. How many striplings have conquered their gigantic foes in all their most formidable armour, when they have gone forth against them, though but as it were *with a staff and a sling, in the name of the Lord God of Israel***! How many women and children have trodden down the force of the enemy, *and out of weakness have been made strong*††!

§. 6. Amidst all the opposition of earth and hell, look upward, and look forward, and you will feel your heart animated by the view. Your general is near: he is near to aid you: he is near to reward you: when you feel the temptation press the hardest, think of him who endured even the cross itself for your rescue. View the fortitude of your divine leader, and endeavour to march on in his steps. Hearken to his voice, for he proclaims it aloud, *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me*‡‡: *be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life* §§. And Oh how bright will it shine! and how long will its lustre last! When the gems that adorn the crowns of monarchs, and pass (instructive thought!) from one royal head to another through succeeding centuries, are melted down in the last flame, it is *a crown of glory which fadeth not away*‖‖!

§. 7. It is indeed true, that *such as turn aside to crooked paths, will be led forth with the workers of iniquity*¶¶ to that terrible execution, which the divine justice is preparing for them; and that it would have been *better for them, not to have known the way of righteousness, than after having known it,*

* Heb. ii. 10. † 2 Kings vi. 16. ‡ Psal. cxxv. 1. § Zech. x. 5.
‖ 1 Pet. v. 9. ¶ Isai. xl. 29. ** 1 Sam. xvii. 40—45. †† Heb. xi 34.
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‖ 1 Pet. v. 9. ¶ Isai. xl. 29. ** 1 Sam. xvii. 40—45. †† Heb. xi 34.
‡‡ Rev. xxii. 12. §§ Rev. ii. 10. ‖‖ 1 Pet. v. 4. ¶¶ Psal. cxxv. 5.

*to turn aside from the holy commandment**. But I would, by divine grace, *hope better things of you*†. And I make it my hearty prayer for you, my reader, that you may be *kept by the mighty power of God*, kept as in a garrison, on all sides fortified, in the securest manner, *through faith unto salvation*‡.

The Soul alarmed by a Sense of these Difficulties, committing itself to Divine Protection.

" BLESSED God, it is to thine almighty power that I flee. Behold me surrounded with difficulties and dangers, and stretch out thine omnipotent arm to save me; *Oh thou that savest by thy right hand them that put their trust in thee, from those that rise up against them*‖. This day do I solemnly put myself under thy protection: exert thy power in my favour, and permit me to make *the shadow of thy wings my refuge*§! Let *thy grace be sufficient for me, and thy strength be made perfect in my weakness*¶. I dare not say, *I will never forsake thee; I will never deny thee;*** but I hope I can truly say, Oh Lord, I would not do it; and that according to my present apprehension and purpose, death would appear to me much less terrible, than in any wilful and deliberate instance to offend thee. Oh root out those corruptions from my heart, which in an hour of pressing temptation might incline me to view things in a different light, and so might betray me into the hands of the enemy! Strengthen my faith, O Lord, and encourage my hope! Inspire me with an heroic resolution in opposing every thing that lies in my way to heaven; and let me *set my face like a flint*††, against all the assaults of earth and hell! *If sinners entice me, let me not consent*‡‡; if they insult me, let me not regard it; if they threaten me, let me not fear! Rather may a holy and ardent, yet prudent and well-governed zeal, take occasion from that malignity of heart which they discover, to attempt their reformation! At least, let me never be ashamed to plead thy cause against the most profane deriders of religion! *Make me to hear joy and gladness* in my soul; and I will endeavour to *teach transgressors thy ways, that sinners may be converted unto thee*‖‖! Yea, Lord, while my fears continue, though I should apprehend myself condemned, I am condemned so righteously for my own folly, that I would be thine advocate, though against myself.

* 2 Pet. ii. 21. † Heb. vi 9. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 5. ‖ Psal. xvii. 7.
§ Psal. lvii. 1. ¶ 2 Cor. xii. 9. ** Mark xiv. 31. †† Isai. l. 7.
‡‡ Prov. i. 10. ‖‖ Psal. li. 8, 13.

"Keep me, O Lord, now, and at all times! Never let me think, whatever age or station I attain, that I am strong enough to maintain the combat without thee! Nor let me imagine myself, even in this infancy of religion in my soul, so weak, that thou canst not support me! Wherever thou leadest me, there let me follow; and whatever station thou appointest me, there let me maintain the holy war against all the enemies of my salvation, and rather fall in it than basely abandon it!

"And thou, O glorious Redeemer, *the Captain of my salvation*, the great *author and finisher of* my *faith**, when I am in danger of denying thee, as Peter did, look upon me with that mixture of majesty and tenderness†, which may either secure me from falling, or may speedily recover me to God and my duty again! And teach me to take occasion, even from my miscarriages, to humble myself more deeply for all that has been amiss, and to redouble my future diligence and caution! Amen!"

CHAP. XVII.

The Christian urged to, and assisted in, an express Act of Self-dedication to the Service of God.

The Advantages of such a Surrender are briefly suggested, §. 1. Advice for the Manner of doing it; that it be deliberate, cheerful, entire, perpetual; §. 2, 3, 4. And that it be expressed with some affecting Solemnity, §. 5. A written Instrument to be signed and declared before God at some Season of extraordinary Devotion, proposed, §. 6, 7. The chapter concludes with a Specimen of such an Instrument, together with an Abstract of it, to be used with proper and requisite Alterations.

§. 1. AS I would hope, that notwithstanding all the views of opposition which do or may arise, yet in consideration of those noble supports and motives which have been mentioned in the two preceding chapters, you are heartily determined for the service of God, I would now urge you to make a solemn surrender of yourself unto it. Do not only form such a purpose in your heart, but expressly declare it in the divine presence. Such solemnity in the manner of doing it, is certainly very reasonable in the nature of things; and sure it is highly expedient, for binding to the Lord such a treacherous heart, as we know

* Heb. xii. 2. † Luke xxii. 61.

our own to be. It will be pleasant to reflect upon it, as done at such and such a time, with such and such circumstances of place and method, which may serve to strike the memory and the conscience. The sense of the vows of God which are upon you, will strengthen you in an hour of temptation; and the recollection may also encourage your humble boldness and freedom in applying to him under the character and relation of your covenant God and Father, as future exigencies may require.

§. 2. Do it therefore, but do it deliberately. Consider what it is that you are to do: and consider how reasonable it is that it should be done, and done cordially and cheerfully *not by constraint, but willingly**: For in this sense, and in every other, *God loves a cheerful giver*†. Now surely there is nothing we should do with greater cheerfulness or more cordial consent, than making such a surrender of ourselves to the Lord; to the God who created us, who brought us into this pleasant and well furnished world, who supported us in our tender infancy, who guarded us in the thoughtless days of childhood and youth, who has hitherto continually helped, sustained, and preserved us. Nothing can be more reasonable than that we should acknowledge him as our rightful owner and our sovereign ruler; than that we should devote ourselves to him as our most gracious benefactor, and seek him as our supreme felicity. Nothing can be more apparently equitable, than that we, the product of his power, and the price of his Son's blood, should be his, and his for ever. If you see the matter in its just view, it will be the grief of your soul, that you have ever alienated yourself from the blessed God and his service; so far will you be from wishing to continue in that state of alienation another year or another day, you will rejoice to bring back to him his revolted creature; and as you have in times past *yielded your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, you will delight to yield yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and to employ your members as instruments of righteousness unto God*‡.

§. 3. The surrender will also be as entire, as it is cheerful and immediate. All you are, and all you have, and all you can do, your time, your possessions, your influence over others, will be devoted to him, that for the future it may be employed entirely for him, and to his glory. You will desire to keep back nothing from him; but will seriously judge, that you are

* 1 Pet. v. 2. † 2 Cor ix. 7. ‡ Rom. vi. 13.

then in the truest and noblest sense your own, when you are most entirely his. You are also on this great occasion, to resign all that you have to the disposal of his wise and gracious providence; not only owning his power, but consenting to his undoubted right, to do what he pleases with you, and all that he has given you; and declaring a hearty approbation of all that he has done, and of all that he may farther do.

§. 4. Once more, let me remind you, that this surrender must be perpetual. You must give yourself up to God in such a manner, as never more to pretend to be your own: for the rights of God are, like his nature, eternal and immutable; and with regard to his rational creatures, are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

§. 5. I would farther advise and urge, that this dedication may be made with all possible solemnity. Do it in express words. And perhaps it may be in many cases most expedient, as many pious divines have recommended, to do it in writing. Set your hand and seal to it, "that on such a day of such a month and year, and at such a place, on full consideration and serious reflection, you came to this happy resolution, that *whatever others might do, you would serve the Lord**.

§. 6. Such an instrument, you may, if you please, draw up for yourself; or if you rather chuse to have it drawn up to your hand, you may find something of this nature below, in which you may easily make such alterations as shall suit your circumstances, where there is any thing peculiar in them. But whatever you use, weigh it well, meditate attentively upon it, that you may *not be rash with your mouth to utter any thing before God*†. And when you determine to execute this instrument, let the transaction be attended with some more than ordinary religious retirement. Make it, if you conveniently can, a day of secret fasting and prayer: and when your heart is prepared with a becoming awe of the divine majesty, with an humble confidence in his goodness, and an earnest desire of his favour, then present yourself on your knees before God, and read it over deliberately and solemnly; and when you have signed it, lay it by in some secure place, where you may review it whenever you please; and make it a rule with yourself to review it, if possible, at certain seasons of the year, that you may keep up the remembrance of it.

§. 7. At least take this course, till you see your way clear to the table of the Lord, where you are to renew the same

* Josh. xxiv. 15. † Eccl. v. 2.

covenant, and to seal it, with more affecting solemnities. And God grant that you may be enabled to keep it, and in the whole of your conversation to walk according to it! May it be an anchor to your soul in every temptation, and a cordial to it in every affliction! May the recollection of it embolden your addresses to the throne of grace now, and give additional strength to your departing spirit, in a consciousness that it is ascending to your covenant God and Father, and to that gracious Redeemer, whose power and faithfulness will securely *keep what you commit to him until that day**!

An Example of Self-Dedication, or a Solemn form of renewing our Covenant with God.

"ETERNAL and unchangeable Jehovah! Thou great Creator of heaven and earth, and adorable Lord of angels and men! I desire, with the deepest humiliation and abasement of soul, to fall down at this time in thine awful presence; and earnestly pray, that thou wilt penetrate my very heart with a suitable sense of thine unutterable and inconceivable glories!

"Trembling may justly *take hold upon me*†, when I a sinful worm presume to lift up my head to thee, presume to appear in thy majestic presence on such an occasion as this. *Who am I, O Lord God, or what is my house*‡? What is my nature or descent, my character and desert, that I should speak of this, and desire that I may be one party in a covenant, where thou, the King of kings and Lord of lords, art the other! I blush, and am confounded, even to mention it before thee. But, O Lord, great as is thy majesty, so also is thy mercy. If thou wilt hold converse with any of thy creatures, thy superlatively exalted nature must stoop, must stoop infinitely low. And I know, that in and through Jesus, the Son of thy love, thou condescendest to visit sinful mortals, and to allow their approach to thee, and their covenant-intercourse with thee: nay, I know, that the scheme and plan is thine own, and that thou hast graciously sent to propose it to us; and none untaught by thee would have been able to form it, or inclined to embrace it, even when actually proposed.

"To thee therefore do I now come, invited by the name of thy Son, and trusting in his righteousness and grace. Laying myself at thy feet with shame and confusion of face, and

* 2 Tim. i. 12. † Job xxi. 6. ‡ 2 Sam. vii. 18.

smiting upon my breast, I say with the humble publican, *God be merciful to me a sinner** ! I acknowledge, O Lord, that I have been a great transgressor. *My sins have reached unto heaven*†, and *mine iniquities are lifted up unto the skies*‡. The irregular propensities of my corrupted and degenerate nature have, in ten thousand aggravated instances, *wrought to bring forth fruit unto death*§. And if thou shouldst be strict to mark mine offences, I must be silent under a load of guilt, and immediately sink into destruction. But thou hast graciously called me to return unto thee, though I have been *a wandering sheep, a prodigal son, a backsliding child*‖. Behold therefore, O Lord, I come unto thee. I come, convinced not only of my sin, but of my folly. I come from my very heart ashamed of myself, and with an acknowledgment in the sincerity and humility of my soul, that *I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly*¶. I am confounded myself at the remembrance of these things: but be thou *merciful to my unrighteousness, and do not remember against me my sins and my transgressions*** ! Permit me, O Lord, to bring back unto thee those powers and faculties which I have ungratefully and sacrilegiously alienated from thy service ; and receive, I beseech thee, thy poor revolted creature, who is now convinced of thy right to him, and desires nothing in the whole world so much, as to be thine !

" Blessed God, it is with the utmost solemnity that I make this surrender of myself unto thee. *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth ; I avouch the Lord this day to be my God*†† ; and I avouch and declare myself this day, to be one of his covenant-children and people. Hear, O thou God of heaven, and record it in the *book of thy remembrance*‡‡, that henceforth I am thine, entirely thine. I would not merely consecrate unto thee some of my powers, or some of my possessions ; or give thee a certain proportion of my services, or all I am capable of for a limited time ; but I would be wholly thine, and thine for ever. From this day do I solemnly renounce all the former *lords* which *have had dominion over me*§§, every sin and every lust ; and bid, in thy name, an eternal defiance to the powers of hell, which have most unjustly usurped the empire over my soul, and to all the corruptions which their fatal temptations have introduced into it. The whole frame of my nature, all the facul-

* Luke xviii. 13. † Rev. xviii. 5. ‡ Jer. li. 9. § Rom. vi. 5.
‖ Jer. iii. 22. ¶ 1 Sam. xxvi. 21. ** Heb. viii. 12. †† Deut. xxvi. 17.
‡‡ Mal. iii. 16 §§ Isai. xxvi. 13.

ties of my mind, and all the members of my body would I present before thee this day, *as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which I know to be my most reasonable service**. To thee I consecrate all my worldly possessions: in thy service I desire to spend all the remainder of my time upon earth, and beg thou wouldst instruct and influence me, so that, whether my abode here be longer or shorter, every year, and month, every day and hour, may be used in such a manner as shall most effectually promote thine honour, and subserve the schemes of thy wise and gracious providence. And I earnestly pray, that whatever influence thou givest me over others, in any of the superior relations of life in which I may stand, or in consequence of any peculiar regard which may be paid me, thou wouldst give me strength and courage to exert myself to the utmost, for thy glory: resolving not only that I will myself do it, but that all others, so far as I can rationally and properly influence them, *shall serve the Lord*†. In this course, O blessed God, would I steadily persevere to the very end of my life; earnestly praying, that every future day of it may supply the deficiencies, and correct the irregularities of the former; and that I may by divine grace be enabled, not only to hold on in that happy way, but daily to grow more active in it!

"Nor do I only consecrate all that I am, and have, to thy service; but I also most humbly resign, and submit to thine holy and sovereign will, myself, and all that I can call mine. I leave, O Lord, to thy management and direction, all I possess, and all I wish; and set every enjoyment and every interest before thee, to be disposed of as thou pleasest. Continue or remove, what thou hast given me; bestow, or refuse, what I imagine I want, as thou, Lord, shalt see good! And though I dare not say, I will never repine; yet I hope I may venture to say, that I will labour, not only to submit, but to acquiesce; not only to bear what thou doest in thy most afflictive dispensations, but to consent to it, and to praise thee for it; contentedly resolving, in all that thou appointest for me, my will into thine, and looking on myself as nothing, and on thee, O God, as the great eternal all, whose word ought to determine every thing; and whose government ought to be the joy of the whole rational creation.

"Use me, O Lord, I beseech thee, as the instrument of thy glory; and honour me so far, as, either by doing or suffering what thou shalt appoint, to bring some revenue of praise to thee,

* Rom. xii. 1. † Josh. xxiv. 15.

and of benefit to the world in which I dwell! And may it please thee from this day forward, to number me among thy *peculiar people*, that I may *no more be a stranger and foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God* !* Receive, O heavenly Father, thy returning prodigal! Wash me in the blood of thy dear Son: clothe me with his perfect righteousness; and sanctify me throughout by the power of thy Spirit! Destroy, I beseech thee, more and more the power of sin in mine heart! Transform me more into thine own image, and fashion me to the resemblance of Jesus, whom henceforward I would acknowledge as my teacher and sacrifice, my intercessor and my Lord! Communicate to me, I beseech thee, all needful influences of thy purifying, thy cheering, and thy comforting spirit! And *lift up that light of thy countenance upon me, which will put* the sublimest *joy and gladness into my soul !*†

"Dispose my affairs, O God, in a manner which may be most subservient to thy glory and my own truest happiness; and when I have done and borne thy will upon earth, call me from hence at what time, and in what manner thou pleasest: only grant, that in my dying moments, and in the near prospects of eternity, I may remember these my engagements to thee, and may employ my latest breath in thy service! And do thou, Lord, when thou seest the agonies of dissolving nature upon me, remember this covenant too, even though I should then be incapable of recollecting it! Look down, O my heavenly Father, with a pitying eye, upon thy languishing, thy dying child; place thine everlasting arms underneath me for my support; put strength and confidence into my departing spirit; and receive it to the embraces of thine everlasting love! Welcome it to the abodes of *them that sleep in Jesus*‡, to wait with them that glorious day, when the last of thy promises to thy covenant people, shall be fulfilled in their triumphant resurrection, and that abundant entrance, which shall *be administered to them into that everlasting kingdom* ‖, of which thou hast assured them by thy covenant, and in the hope of which I now lay hold on it, desiring to live and to die, as with mine hand on that hope!

"And when I am thus numbered among the dead, and all the interests of mortality are over with me for ever, if this solemn memorial should chance to fall into the hands of any surviving friends, may it be the means of making serious impressions on their mind! May they read it, not only as my

* Eph. ii. 19. † Psal. iv. 6, 7. ‡ 1 Thess. iv. 14. ‖ 2 Pet. i. 11.

an awful tendency has it, to fix the conviction, that *we are not our own, being bought with such a price*!* What a tendency has it, to guard against every temptation to those sins which we have so solemnly renounced, and to engage our fidelity to him to whom we have bound our souls as with an oath! Well may *our hearts be knit together in mutual love*†, when we consider ourselves as *one in Christ*‡: his blood becomes the cement of the society, joins us in spirit, not only to each other, but *to all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours*§: and we anticipate, in pleasing hope, that blessed day, when the assembly shall be complete, and we shall all *be for ever with the Lord*‖. Well may these views engage us to *deny ourselves, and to take up our cross to follow our crucified master*¶: well may they engage us to do our utmost by prayer, and all other suitable endeavours, to serve his followers and his friends; to serve those whom he hath purchased with his blood, and who are to be his associates, and ours, in the glories of an happy immortality.

§. 5. It is also the express institution and command of our blessed Redeemer, that the members of such societies should be tenderly solicitous for the spiritual welfare of each other: and that, on the whole, his churches may be kept pure and holy, that they should *withdraw themselves from every brother that walketh disorderly***; that they should *mark such as cause offences or scandals among them, contrary to the doctrine which they have learned, and avoid them*††; *that if any obey not the word of Christ by his apostles, they should have no fellowship or communion with such, that they may be ashamed*‡‡; that they should not eat with such as are notoriously irregular in their behaviour, but on the contrary, should *put away from among themselves such wicked persons*‖‖. It is evident therefore, that the institution of such societies is greatly for the honour of christianity, and for the advantage of its particular professors. And consequently, every consideration of obedience to our common Lord, and of prudent regard to our own benefit and that of our brethren, will require, that those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, should enter into them, and assemble among them in these their most solemn and peculiar acts of communion at his table.

§. 6. I entreat you therefore, and if I may presume to say

* 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. † Col. ii. 2. ‡ Gal. iii. 28. § 1 Cor. i. 2.
‖ 1 Thess. iv. 17. ¶ Mat. xvi. 24. ** 2 Thess. iii. 6. †† Rom. xvi. 17.
‡‡ 2 Thess. iii. 14. ‖‖ 1 Cor. v. 11, 13.

it, in his name, and by his authority I charge it on your conscience, that this precept of our dying Lord, go not, as it were, for nothing with you; but that, if you indeed love him, you keep this, as well as the rest of his commandments—I know you may be ready to form objections. I have elsewhere debated many of the chief of them at large, and I hope, not without some good effect*. The great question is that which relates to your being prepared for a worthy attendance: and in conjunction with what has been said before, I think that may be brought to a very short issue. Have you, so far as you know your own heart, been sincere, in that deliberate surrender of yourself to God, through Christ, which I recommended in the former chapter? If you have, (whether it were with or without the particular form or manner of doing it there recommended,) you have certainly taken hold of the covenant, and therefore have a right to the seal of it. And there is not, and cannot be any other view of the ordinance, in which you can have any further objection to it. If you desire to remember Christ's death; if you desire to renew the dedication of yourself to God through him; if you would list yourself among his people; if you would love them and do them good according to your ability; and, on the whole, would not allow yourself in the practice of any one known sin, or in the omission of one known duty; then I will venture confidently to say, not only that you may be welcome to the ordinance, but that it was instituted for such as you.

§. 7. As for other objections, a few words may suffice by way of reply. The weakness of the religious principle in your soul, if it be really implanted there, is so far from being an argument against your seeking such a method to strengthen it, that it rather strongly inforces the necessity of doing it.—The neglect of this solemnity, by so many that call themselves christians, should rather engage you so much the more to distinguish your zeal for an institution, in this respect so much slighted and injured.——And as for the fears of aggravating guilt in case of apostacy, do not indulge them. This may, by the divine blessing, be an effectual remedy against the evil you fear; and it is certain, that after what you must already have known and felt, before you could be brought into your present situation, (on the suppositions I have now been making,) there can be no room to think of a retreat; no room, even for the wretched

* See the "Fourth of my Sermons to Young Persons."

hope of being less miserable than the generality of those that have perished. Your scheme therefore must be, to make your salvation as sure, and to make it as glorious as possible; and I know not any appointment of our blessed Redeemer, which may have a more comfortable aspect upon that blessed end, than this which I am recommending to you.

§. 8. One thing I would at least insist upon, and I see not with what face it can be denied. I mean, that you should take this matter into a serious consideration: that you should diligently enquire, 'whether you have reason in your conscience to believe it is the will of God you should now approach to the ordinance, or not:' and that you should continue your reflections, your enquiries, and your prayers, till you find farther encouragement to come, if that encouragement be hitherto wanting. For of this be assured, that a state in which you are on the whole unfit to approach this ordinance, is a state in which you are destitute of the necessary preparations for death and heaven; in which therefore, if you would not allow yourselves to slumber on the brink of destruction, you ought not to rest so much as one single day.

A Prayer for one, who earnestly desires to approach the Table of the Lord, yet has some remaining Doubts concerning his Right to that solemn Ordinance.

"BLESSED Lord, I adore thy wise and gracious appointments, for the edification of thy church in holiness and in love. I thank thee, that thou hast commanded thy servants, to form themselves into societies; and I adore my gracious Saviour, who hath instituted, as with his dying breath, the holy solemnity of his supper, to be through all ages a memorial of his dying love, and a bond of that union which it is his sovereign pleasure that his people should preserve. I hope thou, Lord, art witness to the sincerity, with which I desire to give myself up to thee; and that I may call thee to record on my soul, that if I now hesitate about this particular manner of doing it, it is not because I would allow myself to break any of thy commands, or to slight any of thy favours. I trust thou knowest that my present delay arises only from my uncertainty as to my duty, and a fear of profaning holy things by an unworthy approach to them. Yet surely, O Lord, if thou hast given me a reverence for thy command, a desire of communion with thee, and a willingness to devote myself wholly to thy service, I may regard it as a token for good, that thou art disposed to receive me, and that I am not wholly unqualified for an ordinance, which I so highly

honour, and so earnestly desire. I therefore make it my humble request unto thee, O Lord, this day, that thou wouldst graciously be pleased to instruct me in my duty, and to *teach me the way which I should take. Examine me, O Lord, and prove me, try my reins and my heart**!* Is there any secret sin, to the love and practice of which I would indulge? Is there any of thy precepts, in the habitual breach of which I would allow myself? I trust, I can appeal to thee as a witness, that there is not. Let me not then wrong mine own soul, by a causeless and sinful absence from thy sacred table! But grant, O Lord, I beseech thee, that thy word, thy providence, and thy spirit may so concur, as to *make my way plain before me†!* Scatter my remaining doubts, if thou seest they have no just foundation! Fill me with a more assured faith, with a more ardent love: and plead thine own cause with my heart in such a manner, as that I may not be able any longer to delay that approach, which, if I am thy servant indeed, is equally my duty and my privilege! In the mean time, grant, that it may never be long out of my thoughts: but that I may give all diligence, if there be any remaining occasion of doubt, to remove it by a more affectionate concern to avoid whatever is displeasing to the eyes of thine holiness, and to practise the full extent of my duty! May the views of Christ crucified be so familiar to my mind, and may a sense of his dying love so powerfully constrain my soul, that my own growing experience may put it out of all question, that I am one of those for whom he intended this feast of love!

"And even now, as joined to thy churches in spirit and in love, though not in so express and intimate a bond as I could wish, would I heartily pray, that thy blessing may be on all thy people: that thou wouldst *feed thine heritage, and lift them up for ever‡*! May every christian society flourish in knowledge, in holiness, and in love! May all thy priests be clothed with salvation, that by their means *thy chosen people may be made joyful§*! And may there be a glorious accession to thy churches every where, of those who may fly to them *as a cloud, and as doves to their windows‖*! May thy table, O Lord, be *furnished with guests¶*; and may all that love thy salvation, say, *let the Lord be magnified, who hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants***! And I earnestly pray, that all who profess to have received Christ Jesus the Lord, may be duly careful to *walk in*

* Psal. xxvi. 2. † Prov. xv. 19. ‡ Psal. xxviii. 9. § Psal. cxxxii. 16. Isa. lx. 8. ¶ Matt. xxii. 10. ** Psal. xxxv. 27.

*him** ; and that we may be all preparing for the general assembly of the first-born, and may join in that nobler and more immediate worship, where all these types and shadows shall be laid aside ; where even these memorials shall be no longer necessary ; but a living, present Redeemer shall be the everlasting joy of those, who here in his absence have delighted to commemorate his death ! Amen."

N. B. I purposed to have added something here, concerning "a regular approach to the Lord's table," a proper "attendance upon it, and suitable reflections after it:" But I find this work swell under my hand, beyond what I at first expected ; and therefore, as these articles have been handled by so many valuable writers, I chuse to refer to them, and particularly to "Dr. Earle's Sacramental Exercises," and "Mr. Grove's Devotional Exercises relating to the Lord's Supper:" Books which I think remarkably excellent in their kind, and which may be had at very easy rates. Yet for the farther assistance of devout communicants, I have some thoughts of publishing a small volume of "Sacramental Meditations on Select Texts of Scripture," if God spare me to finish my "Exposition on the New Testament," and some other pieces, which I have now in hand.

CHAP. XIX.

Some more particular Directions for maintaining continual Communion with God, or being in his Fear all the Day long.

A Letter to a pious Friend on this Subject introduced here, §. 1. A general Plan of Directions, §. 2. [I.] For the beginning of the Day: §. 3. (1.) Lifting up the Heart to God at our first Awakening: §. 4. (2.) Setting ourselves to the secret Devotions of the Morning; with Respect to which particular Advices are given, §. 5—10. [II.] For the Progress of the Day: §. 11. Directions are given concerning, (1.) Seriousness in Devotion, §. 12. (2.) Diligence in Business, §. 13. (3.) Prudence in Recreations, §. 14. (4.) Observation of Providences, §. 15. (5.) Watchfulness against Temptations, §. 16. (6.) Dependence on Divine Influences, §. 17. (7.) Government of the Thoughts when in Solitude, §. 18. (8.) Management of Discourse in Company, §. 19. (III.) For the Conclusion of the Day: §. 20. (1.) With the secret Devotions of the Evening, §. 21. Directions for Self-Examination at large, §. 22, 23. (2.) Lying down with a proper Temper, §. 24. Conclusion of the Letter, §. 25, and of the Chapter: §. 26. With a serious View of Death, proper to be taken at the Close of the Day.

§. 1. I WOULD hope, that upon serious consideration, self-examination, and prayer, the reader may by this time be come to a resolution to attend the table of the Lord, and to seal his vows there. I will now suppose that solemn transaction to be

* Col. ii. 6.

over, or some other deliberate act to have passed by which he has given himself up to the service of God; and that his concern now is to enquire, how he may act according to the vows of God which are upon him. Now for his farther assistance here, besides the general view I have already given of the christian temper and character, I will propose some more particular directions, relating to maintaining that devout, spiritual, and heavenly character, which may in the language of scripture be called a daily walking with God, or *being in his fear all the day long**. And I know not how I can express the idea and plan, which I have formed of this, in a more clear and distinct manner than I did in a letter, which I wrote many years ago† to a young person of eminent piety, with whom I had then an intimate friendship; and who, to the great grief of all that knew him, died a few months after he received it. Yet I hope he lived long enough to reduce the directions into practice, which I wish and pray that every reader may do, so far as they may properly suit his capacities and circumstances in life, considering it as if addressed to himself.—I say, (and desire it may be observed,) that I wish my reader may act on these directions, so far as they may properly suit his capacities and circumstances in life; for I would be far from laying down the following particulars as universal rules for all, or for any one person in the world at all times. Let them be practised by those that are able, and when they have leisure: and when you cannot reach them all, come as near the most important of them as you conveniently can.—With this precaution I proceed to the letter, which I would hope, after this previous care to guard against the danger of mistaking it, will not discourage any the weakest christian. Let us humbly and cheerfully do our best, and rejoice that we have so gracious a father who knows all our infirmities, and so compassionate an high priest to recommend to divine acceptance the feeblest efforts of sincere duty and love!

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Since you desire my thoughts in writing, and at large, on the subject of our late conversation, viz. "By what particular methods in our daily conduct, a life of devotion and usefulness may be most happily maintained and secured?" I set myself with cheerfulness, to recollect and digest the hints which I then gave you; hoping it may be of some service to you in your most important interest; and may also fix on my own mind a deeper

* Prov. xxiii. 17. † N. B. It was in the year 1727.

sense of my obligations to govern my own life by the rules I offer to others. I esteem attempts of this kind among the pleasantest fruits, and the surest cements of friendship, and as I hope ours will last for ever, I am persuaded a mutual care to cherish sentiments of this kind will add everlasting endearments to it.

§. 2. The directions you will expect from me on this occasion, naturally divide themselves into three heads, how we are to regard God,—in the beginning,—the progress,—and the close of the day. I will open my heart freely to you with regard to each, and will leave you to judge how far these hints may suit your circumstances; aiming at least to keep between the extremes, of a superstitious strictness in trifles, and of an indolent remissness, which, if admitted in little things, may draw after it criminal neglects, and at length more criminal indulgences.

§. 3. [I.] In the beginning of the day: it should certainly be our care,—to lift up our hearts to God, as soon as we wake, and while we are rising!—and then, to set ourselves seriously and immediately to the secret devotions of the morning.

§. 4. For the first of these, it seems exceedingly natural. There are so many things that may suggest a great variety of pious reflections and ejaculations, which are so obvious, that one would think a serious man could hardly miss them. The ease and cheerfulness of our mind at our first awakening; the refreshment we find from sleep; the security we have enjoyed in that defenceless state; the provision of warm and decent apparel; the cheerful light of the returning sun; or even (which is not unfit to mention to you,) the contrivances of art, taught and furnished by the great author of all our conveniences, to supply us with many useful hours of life in the absence of the sun; the hope of returning to the dear society of our friends; the prospect of spending another day, in the service of God, and the improvement of our own minds; and above all, the lively hope of a joyful resurrection to an eternal day of happiness and glory: any of these particulars, and many more which I do not mention, may furnish us with matter of pleasing reflection and cheerful praise, while we are rising. And for our farther assistance, when we are alone at this time, it may not be improper to speak sometimes to ourselves, and sometimes to our heavenly Father, in the natural expressions of joy and thankfulness. Permit me, Sir, to add, that if we find our hearts in such a frame at our first awakening, even that is just matter of praise, and the rather, as perhaps it is an answer to the prayer with which we lay down.

§. 5. For the exercise of secret devotion in the morning,

which I hope will generally be our first work, I cannot prescribe an exact method to another. You must, my dear friend, consult your own taste in some measure. The constituent parts of the service, are in the general plain. Were I to propose a particular model for those, who have half, or three quarters of an hour at command, (which with prudent conduct I suppose most may have) it should be this.

§. 6. To begin the stated devotions of the day with a solemn act of praise, offered to God on our knees, and generally with a low, yet distinct voice; acknowledging the mercies we had been reflecting on while rising; never forgetting to mention Christ, as the great foundation of all our enjoyments and our hopes, or to return thanks for the influences of the blessed Spirit, which have led our hearts to God, or are then engaging us to seek him. This, as well as other offices of devotion afterwards mentioned, must be done attentively and sincerely; for not to offer our praises heartily, is in the sight of God not to praise him at all. This address of praise may properly be concluded with an express renewal of our covenant with God, declaring our continued repeated resolution of being devoted to him, and particularly of living to his glory the ensuing day.

§. 7. It may be proper after this, to take a prospect of the day before us, so far as we can probably foresee in the general, where and how it may be spent; and seriously to reflect, "how shall I employ myself for God this day? What business is to be done, and in what order? What opportunities may I expect, either of doing, or of receiving good? What temptations am I like to be assaulted with, in any place, company, or circumstance, which may probably occur? In what instances have I lately failed? And how shall I be safest now?"

§. 8. After this review, it would be proper to offer up a short prayer, begging, that God would quicken us to each of these foreseen duties; that he would fortify us against each of those apprehended dangers; that he would grant us success in such or such a business undertaken for his glory; and also, that he would help us to discover and improve unforeseen opportunities, to resist unexpected temptations, and to bear patiently, and religiously, any afflictions which may surprise us in the day on which we are entering.

§. 9. I would advise you after this to read some portion of scripture; not a great deal, nor the whole bible in its course: but some select lessons out of its most useful parts, perhaps ten or twelve verses; not troubling yourself much about the exact connection, or other critical niceties, which may occur, (though

at other times I would recommend them to your enquiry, as you have ability and opportunity;) but considering them merely in a devotional and practical view. Here take such instructions as readily present themselves to your thoughts, repeat them over to your own conscience, and charge your heart religiously to observe them and act upon them, under a sense of the divine authority which attends them. And if you pray over the substance of this scripture with your bible open before you, it may impress your memory and your heart yet more deeply, and may form you to a copiousness and variety, both of thought and expression in prayer.

§. 10. It might be proper to close these devotions with a psalm or hymn: and I rejoice with you, that through the pious care of Dr. Watts, and some other sacred poets, we are provided with so rich a variety for the assistance of the closet and family on these occasions, as well as for the service of the sanctuary.

§. 11. [II.] The most material directions which have occurred to me, relating to the progress of the day, are these;—that we be serious in the devotions of the day;—that we be diligent in the business of it, that is, in the prosecution of our worldly callings?—that we be temperate and prudent in the recreations of it;—that we carefully remark the providences of the day;—that we cautiously guard against the temptations of it;—that we keep up a lively and humble dependence upon the divine influence, suitable to every emergency of it;—that we govern our thoughts well in the solitude of the day,—and our discourses well in the conversation of it. These, sir, were the heads of a sermon which you lately heard me preach on this occasion, and to which I know you referred in that request which I am now endeavouring to answer. I will therefore touch upon the most material hints, which fell under each of these particulars.

§. 12. (1.) For seriousness in devotion, whether public or domestic: Let us take a few moments before we enter upon such solemnities, to pause, and reflect, on the perfections of the God we are addressing to, on the importance of the business we are coming about, on the pleasure and advantage of a regular and devout attendance, and on the guilt and folly of an hypocritical formality. When engaged, let us maintain a strict watchfulness over our own spirits, and check the first wanderings of thought. And when the duty is over, let us immediately reflect on the manner in which it has been performed, and ask our own consciences whether we have reason to conclude,

that we are accepted of God in it? For there is a certain manner of going through these offices, which our own hearts will immediately tell us, it is impossible for God to approve: and if we have inadvertently fallen into it, we ought to be deeply humbled before God for it, lest *our very prayer become sin**.

§. 13. (2.) As for the hours of worldly business; whether it be, as with you, that of the hands; or whether it be the labour of a learned life, not immediately relating to religious matters: let us set to the prosecution of it with a sense of God's authority, and with a regard to his glory. Let us avoid a dreaming, sluggish, indolent temper, which nods over its work, and does only the business of one hour in two or three. In opposition to this, which runs through the life of some people, who yet think they are never idle, let us endeavour to dispatch as much as we well can in a little time; considering, that it is but a little we have in all. And let us be habitually sensible of the need we have of the divine blessing, to make our labours successful.

§. 14. (3.) For seasons of diversion: let us take care, that our recreations be well chosen; that they be pursued with a good intention, to fit us for a renewed application to the labours of life; and thus, that they be only used in subordination to the honour of God, the great end of all our actions. Let us take heed, that our hearts be not estranged from God by them; and that they do not take up too much of our time: always remembering that the faculties of the human nature, and the advantages of the christian revelation, were not given us in vain; but that we are always to be in pursuit of some great and honourable end, and to indulge ourselves in amusements and diversions no farther, than as they make a part in a scheme of rational and manly, benevolent and pious conduct.

§. 15. (4.) For the observation of providences: it will be useful to regard the divine interposition in our comforts and in our afflictions. In our comforts, whether more common or extraordinary; that we find ourselves in continued health; that we are furnished with food for support and pleasure; that we have so many agreeable ways of employing our time; that we have so many friends, and those so good, and so happy; that our business goes on prosperously; that we go out and come in safely; and that we enjoy composure and cheerfulness of spirit, without which nothing else could be enjoyed; all these should be regarded as providential favours; and due acknow-

* Psal. cix. 7.

ledgments should be made to God on these accounts, as we pass through such agreeable scenes. On the other hand, providence is to be regarded in every disappointment, in every loss, in every pain, in every instance of unkindness, from those who have professed friendship: and we should endeavour to argue ourselves into a patient submission, from this consideration, that the hand of God is always mediately, if not immediately in each of them; and that if they are not properly the work of providence, they are at least under its direction. It is a reflection, which we should particularly make with relation to those little cross accidents, (as we are ready to call them,) and those infirmities and follies in the temper and conduct of our intimate friends, which may else be ready to discompose us. And it is the more necessary to guard our minds here, as wise and good men often lose the command of themselves on these comparatively little occasions; who calling up reason and religion to their assistance, stand the shock of great calamities with fortitude and resolution.

§. 16. (5.) For watchfulness against temptations: it is necessary, when changing our place, or our employment, to reflect, "What snares attend me here?" And as this should be our habitual care, so we should especially guard against those snares which in the morning we foresaw. And when we are entering on those circumstances in which we expected the assault, we should reflect, especially if it be a matter of great importance, "Now the combat is going to begin: now God and the blessed angels are observing what constancy, what fortitude there is in my soul, and how far the divine authority, and the remembrance of my own prayers and resolutions, will weigh with me, when it comes to a trial."

§. 17. (6.) As for dependance on divine grace and influence; it must be universal: and since we always need it, we must never forget that necessity. A moment spent in humble fervent breathings after the communions of the divine assistance may do more good, than many minutes spent in mere reasonings: and though indeed this should not be neglected, since the light of reason is a kind of divine illumination; yet still it ought to be pursued in a due sense of our dependance on the Father of lights, or where we think ourselves wisest, we may *become vain in our imaginations**. Let us therefore always call upon God; and say, for instance, when we are going to pray, "Lord, fix my attention! Awaken my holy affections, and *pour out*

* Rom. i. 21, 22.

upon me the spirit of grace and of supplication!* When taking up the bible, or any other good book, *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law†!* Enlighten mine understanding! warm my heart! May my good resolutions be confirmed, and all the course of my life in a proper manner regulated!" When addressing ourselves to any worldly business, "Lord, *prosper thou the work of mine hands upon me‡*, and give thy blessing to my honest endeavours!" When going to any kind of recreation, "Lord, bless my refreshments! Let me not forget thee in them, but still keep thy glory in view!" When coming into company, "Lord, may I do, and get good! *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of my mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers§!* When entering upon difficulties, "Lord, give me *that wisdom, which is profitable to direct ‖! Teach me thy ways, and lead me in a plain path ¶!*" When encountering with temptations, "Let thy *strength*, O gracious Redeemer, *be made perfect in my weakness.***" These instances may illustrate the design of this direction, though they be far from a complete enumeration of all the circumstances in which it is to be regarded.

§. 18. (7.) For the government of our thoughts in solitude: let us accustom ourselves, on all occasions, to exercise a due command over our thoughts. Let us take care of those entanglements of passion, and those attachments to any present interest and view, which would deprive us of our power over them. Let us set before us some profitable subject of thought: such as the perfections of the blessed God, the love of Christ, the value of time, the certainty and importance of death and judgment, and the eternity of happiness or misery which is to follow. Let us also at such intervals reflect, on what we have observed as to the state of our own souls, with regard to the advance or decline of religion; or on the last sermon we have heard, or on the last portion of scripture we have read. You may perhaps, in this connexion, sir, recollect what I have (if I remember right,) proposed to you in conversation; that it might be very useful to select some one verse of scripture, which we had met with in the morning, and to treasure it up in our mind, resolving to think of that at any time when we are at a loss for matter of pious reflection, in any intervals of leisure for entering

* Zech. xii. 10. † Psal. cxix. 18. ‡ Psal. xc. 17. § Eph. iv. 29.
‖ Eccles. x. 10. ¶ Psal. xxvii. 11. ** 2 Cor. xii. 9.

upon it. This will often be as a spring, from whence many profitable and delightful thoughts may arise, which perhaps we did not before see in that connexion and force. Or if it should not be so, yet I am persuaded it will be much better to repeat the same scripture in our mind an hundred times in a day, with some pious ejaculation formed upon it, than to leave our thoughts at the mercy of all those various trifles, which may otherwise intrude upon us; the variety of which will be far from making amends for their vanity.

§. 19. (8.) Lastly, For the government of our discourse in company: we should take great care, that nothing may escape us, which can expose us, or our christian profession, to censure and reproach: nothing injurious to those that are absent, or to those that are present; nothing malignant, nothing insincere, nothing which may corrupt, nothing which may provoke, nothing which may mislead those about us. Nor should we, by any means be content, that what we say is innocent; it should be our desire, that it may be edifying to ourselves and others. In this view, we should endeavour to have some subject of useful discourse always ready; in which we may be assisted by the hints given about furniture for thought, under the former head. We should watch for decent opportunities of introducing useful reflections; and if a pious friend attempt to do it, we should endeavour to second it immediately. When the conversation does not turn directly on religious subjects, we should endeavour to make it improving some other way: we should reflect on the character and capacities of our company, that we may lead them to talk of what they understand best; for their discourses on those subjects will probably be most pleasing to themselves, as well as most useful to us. And in pauses of discourse, it may not be improper to lift up an holy ejaculation to God, that his grace may assist us and our friends in our endeavours to do good to each other; that all we say, and do, may be worthy the character of reasonable creatures and of christians.

§. 20. (III.) The directions for a religious closing of the day, which I shall here mention, are only two.—Let us see to it, that the secret duties of the evening be well performed. And let us lie down on our beds in a pious frame.

§. 21. (1.) For secret devotion in the evening, I would propose a method something different from that in the morning; but still, as then, with due allowances for circumstances, which may make unthought of alterations proper. I should, sir, advise to read a portion of scripture in the first place, with suitable

reflections, and prayer, as above: then to read a hymn, or psalm: after this to enter on self-examination, to be followed by a longer prayer than that which followed reading, to be formed on this review of the day: in this address to the throne of grace it will be highly proper, to intreat that God would pardon the omissions and offences of the day; to praise him for mercies temporal and spiritual; to recommend ourselves to his protection for the ensuing night; with proper petitions for others, whom we ought to bear on our hearts before him; and particularly, for those friends with whom we have conversed or corresponded, in the preceding day. Many other concerns will occur, both in morning and evening prayer, which I have not here hinted at; but I did not apprehend that a full enumeration of these things belonged, by any means, to our present purpose.

§. 22. Before I quit this head, I must take the liberty to remind you, that self-examination is so important a duty, that it will be worth our while to spend a few words upon it. And this branch of it is so easy, that when we have proper questions before us, any person of a common understanding may hope to go through it with advantage under a divine blessing. I offer you, therefore, the following queries, which I hope you will, with such alterations as you may judge requisite, keep near you for daily use. "Did I awake as with God this morning, and rise with a grateful sense of his goodness? How were the secret devotions of the morning performed? Did I offer my solemn praises, and renew the dedication of myself to God, with becoming attention and suitable affections? Did I lay my scheme for the business of the day, wisely and well? How did I read the scripture, or any other devotional or practical piece, which I might afterwards conveniently review? Did it do my heart good, or was it a mere amusement?—How have the other stated devotions of the day been attended, whether in the family or in public? Have I pursued the common business of this day with diligence and spirituality; doing every thing in season, and with all convenient dispatch, and *as unto the Lord**? What time have I lost this day, in the morning or the forenoon, in the afternoon, or the evening?" (for these divisions will assist your recollection;) "and what has occasioned the loss of it? With what temper, and under what regulations, have the recreations of this day been pursued? Have I seen the hand of God in my mercies, health, cheerfulness, food, clothing, books, preservation in journies, success of business, conversation and kindness of

* Colos. iii. 23.

friends, &c.? Have I seen it in afflictions, and particularly in little things, which had a tendency to vex and disquiet me? And with regard to this interposition, have I received my comforts thankfully, and my afflictions submissively? How have I guarded against the temptations of the day, particularly against this or that temptation which I foresaw in the morning? Have I maintained an humble dependance on divine influences? Have I *lived by faith in the Son of God**, and regarded Christ this day, as my teacher and governor, my atonement and intercessor, my example and guardian, my strength and forerunner? Have I been looking forward to death and eternity this day, and considered myself as a probationer for heaven, and through grace an expectant of it? Have I governed my thoughts well, espepecially in such or such an interval of solitude? How was my subject of thought this day chosen, and how was it regarded? Have I governed my discourses well, in such and such company? Did I say nothing passionate, mischievous, slanderous, imprudent, impertinent? Has my heart this day been full of love to God, and to all mankind? And have I sought, and found, and improved opportunities of doing, and of getting good?— With what attention and improvement have I read the scripture this evening? How was self-examination performed the last night; and how have I profited this day by any remarks I then made on former negligences and mistakes? With what temper did I then lie down, and compose myself to sleep?"

§. 23. You will easily see, sir, that these questions are so adjusted, as to be an abridgment of the most material advices I have given in this letter; and I believe I need not, to a person of your understanding, say any thing as to the usefulness of such enquiries. Conscience will answer them in a few minutes; but if you think them too large and particular, you may make a still shorter abstract for daily use, and reserve these, with such obvious alteration as will then be necessary, for seasons of more than ordinary exactness in review, which I hope will occur at least once a week. Secret devotion being thus performed, before drowsiness render us unfit for it, the interval between that and our going to rest must be conducted by the rules mentioned under the next head. And nothing will farther remain to be considered here, but

§. 24. (2.) The sentiments with which we should lie down and compose ourselves to sleep. Now here it is obviously suitable to think of the divine goodness, in adding another day, and

* Gal. ii. 20.

the mercies of it, to the former days and mercies of our life; to take notice of the indulgence of providence in giving us commodious habitations and easy beds, and continuing to us such health of body, that we can lay ourselves down at ease upon them, and such serenity of mind as leaves us any room to hope for refreshing sleep: a refreshment to be sought, not merely as an indulgence to animal nature, but as what our wise Creator, in order to keep us humble in the midst of so many infirmities, has been pleased to make necessary to our being able to pursue his service with renewed alacrity. Thus may our sleeping, as well as our waking hours, be in some sense devoted to God. And when we are just going to resign ourselves to the image of death, (to what one of the ancients beautifully calls its lesser mysteries,) it is also evidently proper to think seriously of that end of all the living, and to renew those actings of repentance and faith, which we should judge necessary if we were to wake no more here. You have once, sir, seen a meditation of that kind in my hand, I will transcribe it for you in the postscript; and therefore shall add no more to this head, but here put a close to the directions you desired.

§. 25. I am persuaded the most important of them have, in one form or another, been long regarded by you, and made governing maxims of your life. I shall greatly rejoice, if the review of these, and the examination and trial of the rest, may be the means of leading you into more intimate communion with God, and so of rendering your life more pleasant and useful, and your eternity, whenever that is to commence, more glorious. There is not a human creature upon earth, whom I should not delight to serve in these important interests; but I can faithfully assure you, that I am, with particular respect,

Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate Friend and Servant.

§. 26. This, reader, with the alteration of a very few words, is the letter I wrote to a worthy friend, (now I doubt not with God,) about sixteen years ago: and I can assuredly say, that the experience of each of these years has confirmed me in these views, and established me in the persuasion, "that one day thus spent is preferable to whole years of sensuality, and the neglect of religion." I chose to insert the letter as it is, because I thought the freedom and particularity of the advice I had given in it, would appear most natural in its original form; and as I propose to enforce these advices in the next chapter, I shall conclude this with that meditation, which I promised my

friend as a postscript; and which I could wish you, to make so familiar to yourself, as that you might be able to recollect the substance of it, whenever you compose yourself to sleep.

A serious View of Death.

"OH my soul, look forward a little with seriousness and attention, and learn wisdom by the *consideration of thy latter end**. Another of thy mortal days is now numbered and finished: and as I have put off my clothes, and laid myself upon my bed for the repose of the night; so will the day of life quickly come to its period, so must the body itself be put off, and laid to its repose in a bed of dust. There let it rest; for it will be no more regarded by me, than the clothes which I have now laid aside. I have another far more important concern to attend. Think, Oh my soul, when death comes, thou art to enter upon the eternal world, and to be fixed either in heaven or in hell. All the schemes and cares, the hopes and fears, the pleasures and sorrows of life, will come to their period, and the world of spirits will open upon thee. And Oh, how soon may it open! Perhaps before the returning sun bring on the light of another day. To-morrow's sun may not enlighten mine eyes, but only shine round a senseless corpse, which may lie in the place of this animated body. At least the death of many in the flower of their age, and many who were superior to me in capacity, piety, and the prospects of usefulness, may loudly warn me not to depend on a long life, and engage me rather to wonder that I am continued here so many years, than to be surprised if I am speedily removed.

"And now, Oh my soul, answer as in the sight of God; art thou ready? Art thou ready? Is there no sin unforsaken, and so unrepented of, to fill me with anguish in my departing moments, and to make me tremble on the brink of eternity? Dread to remain under the guilt of it, and this moment renew thy most earnest applications to the mercy of God, and the blood of a Redeemer, for deliverance from it.

"But if the great account be already adjusted, if thou hast cordially repented of thy numerous offences, if thou hast sincerely committed thyself, by faith, into the hands of the blessed Jesus, and hast not renounced thy covenant with him, by returning to the allowed practice of sin, then start not at the thought of a separation: it is not in the power of death to

* Deut. xxxii. 29.

hurt a soul devoted to God, and united to the great Redeemer. It may take from me my worldly comforts; it may disconcert and break my schemes for service on earth: but, Oh my soul, diviner entertainments, and nobler services wait thee beyond the grave. For ever blessed be the name of God and the love of Jesus, for these quieting, encouraging, joyful views! I will now *lay me down in peace, and sleep**, free from the fears of what shall be the issue of this night, whether life or death may be appointed for me. *Father, into thine hand I commit my spirit†, for thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth‡*, and therefore I can cheerfully refer it to thy choice, whether I shall awake in this world or another."

CHAP. XX.

A serious Persuasive to such a Method of spending our Days as is represented in the former Chapter.

Christians fix their Views too low, and indulge too indolent a Disposition, which makes it more necessary to urge such a Life, as that under Consideration, §. 1, 2. It is therefore inforced, (1.) From its being apparently reasonable, considering ourselves as the Creatures of God, and as redeemed by the Blood of Christ, §. 3, (2.) From its evident Tendency to conduce to our Comfort in Life, §. 4. (3.) From the Influence it will have to promote our Usefulness to others, §. 5. (4.) From its Efficacy to make Afflictions lighter, §. 6. (5.) From its happy Aspect on Death, §. 7. And, (6.) On Eternity, §. 8. Whereas not to desire Improvement would argue a Soul destitute of Religion, §. 9. A Prayer suited to the State of a Soul, who longs to attain the Life recommended above.

§. 1. I HAVE been assigning, in the preceding chapter, what I fear, will seem to some of my readers so hard a task, that they will want courage to attempt it; and indeed it is a life in many respects so far above that of the generality of christians, that I am not without apprehensions, that many who deserve the name, may think the directions, after all the precautions with which I have proposed them, are carried to an unnecessary degree of nicety and strictness. But I am persuaded, much of the credit and comfort of christianity is lost, in consequence of its professors fixing their aims too low, and not conceiving of their high and holy calling in so elevated and sublime a view as the nature of religion would require, and

* Psal. iv. 8. † Luke xxiii. 46. ‡ Psal. xxxi. 5.

the word of God would direct. I am fully convinced, that the expressions of walking with God, of *being in the fear of the Lord all the day long**, and above all, that of *loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength*†, must require, if not all these circumstances, yet the substance of all that I have been recommending, so far as we have capacity, leisure, and opportunity: and I cannot but think, that many might command more of the latter, and perhaps improve their capacities too, if they would take a due care in the government of themselves; if they would give up vain and unnecessary diversions, and certain indulgences, which only suit and delight the lower part of our nature, and (to say the best of them) deprive us of pleasures much better than themselves, if they do not plunge us into guilt. Many of these rules would appear easily practicable, if men would learn to know the value of time, and particularly to redeem it from unnecessary sleep, which wastes many golden hours of the day: hours in which many of God's servants are delighting themselves in him, and drinking in full draughts of the water of life; while these their brethren are slumbering upon their beds, and lost in vain dreams, as far below the common entertainments of a rational creature, as the pleasures of the sublimest devotion are above them.

§. 2. I know likewise, that the mind is very fickle and inconstant; and that it is a hard thing to preserve such a government and authority over our thoughts, as would be very desirable, and as the plan I have laid down will require. But so much of the honour of God, and so much of your own true happiness, depends upon it, that I beg you will give me a patient and attentive hearing while I am pleading with you, and that you will seriously examine the arguments, and then judge, whether a care and conduct like that which I have advised, be not in itself reasonable; and whether it will not be highly conducive to your comfort and usefulness in life, your peace in death, and the advancement and increase of your eternal glory.

§. 3. Let conscience say, whether such a life as I have described above, be not in itself highly reasonable. Look over the substance of it again, and bring it under a close examination; for I am very apprehensive, that some weak objections may rise against the whole, which may in their consequences affect particulars, against which no reasonable man would presume to make any objection at all. Recollect, O christian, and

* Prov. xxiii. 17. † Mark xii. 30.

carry it with you in your memory and your heart, while you are pursuing this review, that you are the creature of God, that you are purchased with the blood of Jesus; and then say, whether these relations in which you stand, do not demand all that application and resolution which I would engage you to. Suppose all the counsels I have given, reduced into practice: suppose every day begun and concluded with such devout breathings after God, and such holy retirements for morning and evening converse with him and with your own heart: suppose a daily care, in contriving how your time may be managed, and in reflecting how it has been employed: suppose this regard to God, this sense of his presence, and zeal for his glory, to run through your acts of worship, your hours of business and recreation: suppose this attention to providence, this guard against temptations this dependance upon divine influence, this government of the thoughts in solitude, and of the discourses in company: Nay, I will add farther, suppose every particular direction given, to be pursued, excepting when particular cases occur, with respect to which you shall be able in conscience to say, "I wave it not from indolence and carelessness, but because I think it will be just now more pleasing to God to be doing something else," which may often happen in human life, where general rules are best concerted: suppose, I say, all this to be done, not for a day, or a week, but through the remainder of life, whether longer or shorter; and suppose this to be reviewed at the close of life, in the full exercise of your rational faculties: will there be reason to say in the reflection, "I have taken too much pains in religion: the author of my being did not deserve all this from me: less diligence, less fidelity, less zeal than this, might have been an equivalent for the blood which was shed for my redemption. A part of my heart, a part of my time, a part of my labours might have sufficed for him who hath given me all my powers, for him who hath delivered me from that destruction, which would have made them my everlasting torment; for him who is raising me to the regions of a blissful immortality." Can you with any face say this? If you cannot, then surely your conscience bears witness, that all I have recommended, under the limitations above, is reasonable; that duty and gratitude require it; and consequently, that by every allowed failure in it, you bring guilt upon your own soul, you offend God, and act unworthy your christian profession.

§. 4. I intreat you farther to consider, whether such a conduct as I have now been recommending, would not conduce

much to your comfort and usefulness in life. Reflect seriously, what is true happiness? Does it consist in distance from God, or in nearness to him? surely you cannot be a christian, surely you cannot be a rational man, if you doubt, whether communion with the great Father of our spirits be a pleasure and felicity: and if it be, then surely they enjoy most of it, who keep him most constantly in view. You cannot but know in your own conscience, that it is this which makes the happiness of Heaven; and therefore the more of it any man enjoys upon earth, the more of Heaven comes down into his soul. If you have made any trial of religion, though it be but a few months or weeks since you first became acquainted with it, you must be some judge of it upon your own experience, which have been the most pleasant days of your life. Have they not been those, in which you have acted most upon these principles; those in which you have most steadily and resolutely carried them through every hour of time, and every circumstance of life? The check which you must in many instances give to your own inclinations, might seem disagreeable; but it would surely be overbalanced in a most happy manner, by the satisfaction you would find in a consciousness of self-government; in having such a command of your thoughts, affections, and actions, as is much more glorious than any authority over others can be.

§. 5. I would also intreat you to consider the influence, which such a conduct as this might have upon the happiness of others. And it is easy to be seen, it must be very great; as you would find your heart always disposed to watch every opportunity of doing good, and to seize it with eagerness and delight. It would engage you to make it the study and business of your life, to order things in such a manner, that the end of one kind and useful action might be the beginning of another; in which you would go on as naturally, as the inferior animals do in those productions and actions by which mankind are relieved or inriched; or as the earth bears her successive crops of different vegetable supplies. And though mankind be, in this corrupt state, so unhappily inclined to imitate evil examples rather than good, yet it may be expected, that while your light shines before men, some seeing your good works will endeavour to transcribe them in their own lives, and so to *glorify your Father which is in Heaven**. The charm of such beautiful models would surely impress some, and incline them at least to attempt an imitation; and every attempt would dispose to another.

* Matt. v. 16.

And thus, through the divine goodness, you might be entitled to a share in the praise, and the reward, not only of the good you had immediately done yourself, but likewise of that which you had engaged others to do. And no eye, but that of an all-searching God, can see, into what distant times or places the blessed consequences may reach. In every instance of which these consequences appear, it will put a generous and sublime joy into your heart; which no worldly prosperity could afford, and which would be the liveliest emblem of that high delight which the blessed God feels, in seeing and making his creatures happy.

§. 6. It is true indeed, that amidst all those pious and benevolent cares, afflictions may come, and in some measure interrupt you in the midst of your projected schemes. But surely these afflictions will sit much lighter, when your heart is gladdened with the peaceful and joyful reflection of your own mind, and with so honourable a testimony of conscience before God and man. Delightful will it be, to go back to past scenes in your pleasing review, and to think, that you have not only been sincerely humbling yourselves for those past offences, which afflictions may bring to your remembrance; but that you have given substantial proofs of the sincerity of that humiliation, by a real reformation of what has been amiss, and by acting with strenuous and vigorous resolution on the contrary principle. And while converse with God, and doing good to men, are made the great business and pleasure of life, you will find a thousand opportunities of enjoyment; even in the midst of these afflictions, which would render you so incapable of relishing the pleasures of sense, that the very mention of them might in those circumstances seem an insult and a reproach.

§. 7. At length, death will come: that solemn and important hour, which hath been passed through by so many thousands who have in the main lived such a life, and by so many millions who have neglected it. And let conscience say, if there was ever any one of all these millions, who had then any reason to rejoice in that neglect; or any one, among the most strict and exemplary christians, who then lamented that his heart and life had been too zealously devoted to God? Let conscience say, whether they have wished to have a part of that time, which they have thus employed, given back to them again, that they might be more conformed to this world; that they might plunge themselves deeper into its amusements, or pursue its honours, its possessions, or its pleasures, with greater eagerness than they had done? If you were yourself dying, and a dear friend or

child stood near you, and this book and the last chapter of it should chance to come into your thoughts, would you caution that friend or child against conducting himself by such rules as I have advanced! The question may perhaps seem unnecessary, where the answer is so plain and so certain. Well then, let me beseech you to learn how you should live, by reflecting how you would die, and what course you would wish to look back upon, when you are just quitting this world, and entering upon another. Think seriously; what if death should surprise you on a sudden, and you should be called into eternity at an hour's or a minute's warning, would you not wish that your last day should have been thus begun; and the course of it, if it were a day of health and activity, should have been thus managed? Would not you wish that your Lord should find you engaged in such thoughts and in such pursuits? Would not the passage, the flight from earth to heaven be most easy, most pleasant in this view and connection? And on the other hand, if death should make more gradual approaches, would not the remembrance of such a pious, holy, humble, diligent and useful life, make a dying bed much softer and easier, than it would otherwise be? You would not die, depending upon these things; God forbid that you should! sensible of your many imperfections, you would, no doubt, desire to throw yourself at the feet of Christ, that you might appear before God, adorned with his righteousness, and washed from your sins in his blood. You would also with your dying breath ascribe to the riches of his grace every good disposition you had found in your heart, and every worthy action you had been enabled to perform. But would it not give you a delight worthy of being purchased with ten thousand worlds to reflect, that *his grace bestowed upon you had not been in vain**; but that you had, from an humble principle of grateful love, glorified your heavenly Father on earth, and in some degree, though not with the perfection you could desire, *finished the work which he had given you to do* †; that you had been living for many past years as on the borders of heaven, and endeavouring to form your heart and life to the temper and manners of its inhabitants?

§. 8. And once more, let me intreat you to reflect on the view you will have of this matter, when you come into a world of glory, if (which I hope will be the happy case) divine mercy conduct you thither. Will not your reception there be affected by your care, or negligence, in this holy course? Will it appear

* 1 Cor. xv. 10. † John xvii. 4.

an indifferent thing in the eye of the blessed Jesus, who distributes the crowns, and allots the thrones there, whether you have been among the most zealous, or the most indolent of his servants? Surely you must wish, to have *an entrance administered unto you abundantly, into the kingdom of your Lord and Saviour* *: and what can more certainly conduce to it, than to be *always abounding in this work* †? You cannot think so meanly of that glorious state, as to imagine, that you shall there look round about you with a secret disappointment, and say in your heart, that you over-valued the inheritance you have received, and pursued it with too much earnestness. You will not surely complain, that it had too many of your thoughts and cares; but on the contrary, you have the highest reason to believe, that if any thing were capable of exciting your indignation and your grief there, it would be that amidst so many motives and so many advantages, you exerted yourself no more in the prosecution of such a prize.

§. 9. But I will not enlarge on so clear a case, and therefore conclude the chapter with reminding you, that to allow yourself deliberately to sit down satisfied with any imperfect attainments in religion, and to look upon a more confirmed and improved state of it as what you do not desire, nay, as what you secretly resolve that you will not pursue, is one of the most fatal signs we can well imagine, that you are an entire stranger to the first principles of it.

A Prayer suited to the State of a Soul, who desires to attain the Life recommended above.

"BLESSED God, I cannot contradict the force of these reasonings: Oh that I may feel more than ever the lasting effects of them! Thou art the great fountain of being, and of happiness; and as from thee, my being was derived, so from thee my happiness directly flows; and the nearer I am to thee, the purer and the more delicious is the stream. *With thee is the fountain of life; in thy light may I see light*‡! The great object of my final hope is to dwell for ever with thee. Give me now some foretaste of that delight! Give me, I beseech thee, to experience *the blessedness of that man who feareth the Lord, and who delighteth greatly in his commandments*§; and so form my heart by thy grace, that I may *be in the fear of the Lord all the day long*‖!

* 2 Pet. i. 11. † 1 Cor. xv. 58. ‡ Psal. xxxvi. 9. § Psal. cxii. 1. ‖ Prov. xxiii. 17.

"To thee may my awakening thoughts be directed; and with the first ray of light that visits mine opening eyes, *lift up, O Lord, the light of thy countenance upon me**! When my faculties are roused from that broken state in which they lay, while buried, and as it were annihilated in sleep, may my first actions be consecrated to thee, O God, who givest me light; who givest me, as it were, every morning a new life and a new reason! enable my heart to pour out itself before thee, with a filial reverence, freedom and endearment! And may I hearken to God, as I desire he should hearken unto me! may thy word be read with attention and pleasure! may my soul be delivered into the mould of it, and may I *hide it in mine heart, that I may not sin against thee*†! Animated by the great motives there suggested, may I every morning be renewing the dedication of myself to thee, through Jesus thy beloved Son; and be deriving from him new supplies of that blessed spirit of thine, whose influences are the life of my soul!

"And being thus prepared, do thou, Lord, lead me forth by the hand to all the duties and events of the day! *In that calling, wherein thou hast been pleased to call me, may I abide with thee*‡; *not being slothful in business; but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*§! May I know the value of time, and always improve it to the best advantage, in such duties as thou hast assigned me; how low soever they may seem, or how painful soever they may be! To thy glory, O Lord, may the labours of life be pursued; and to thy glory may the refreshments of it be sought! *Whether I eat, or drink, or whatever I do*‖, may that end still be kept in view, and may it be attained! And may every refreshment, and release from business, prepare me to serve thee with greater vigour and resolution!

"May mine eye be watchful to observe the descent of mercies from thee; and may a grateful sense of thine hand in them add a savour and a relish to all! And when afflictions come, which in a world like this I would accustom myself to expect, may I remember that they come from thee; and may that fully reconcile me to them, while I firmly believe, that the same love which gives us our daily bread, appoints us our daily crosses; which I would learn to take up, that I may *follow my dear Lord*¶, with a temper like that which he manifested, when ascending Calvary for my sake; saying like him, *the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it***? And when I

* Psal. iv. 6. † Psal. cxix. 11. ‡ 1 Cor. vii. 20. § Rom. xii. 11.
‖ 1 Cor. x. 31. ¶ Mark viii. 34. ** John xviii. 11.

enter into temptation, do thou, Lord, *deliver me from evil** ! Make me sensible, I intreat thee, of my own weakness, that my heart may be raised to thee for present communications of proportionable strength ! When I am engaged in the society of others, may it be my desire and my care, that I may do, and receive, as much good as possible ; and may I continually answer the great purposes of life, by honouring thee, and diffusing useful knowledge and happiness in the world ! And when I am alone, may I remember my heavenly Father is with me ; and may I enjoy the pleasure of thy presence, and feel the animating power of it, awakening my soul to an earnest desire to think, and act, as in thy sight !

" Thus let my days be spent : and let them always be closed in thy fear, and under a sense of thy gracious presence ! Meet me, O Lord, in mine evening retirements ! May I chuse the most proper time for them ; may I diligently attend to reading and prayer ; and when I review my conduct, may I do it with an impartial eye ! Let not self-love spread a false colouring over it ; but may I judge myself, as one that expects to be judged of the Lord, and is very solicitous he may be approved by thee, who *searchest all hearts, and canst not forget any of my works*† ! *Let my prayer come daily before thee as incense, and let the lifting up of my hands be as the morning and the evening sacrifice*‡ ! May I resign my powers to sleep in sweet calmness and serenity ; conscious that I have lived to God in the day, and cheerfully persuaded that I am accepted of thee in Christ Jesus my Lord, and humbly hoping in thy mercy through him whether my days on earth be prolonged, or *the residue of them be cut off in the midst*§ ! If death comes by a leisurely advance, may it find me thus employed ; and if I am called on a sudden to exchange worlds, may my last days and hours be found to have been conducted by such maxims as these ; that I may have a sweet and easy passage from the services of time to the infinitely nobler services of an immortal state ! I ask it through him, who while on earth was the fairest pattern and example of every virtue and grace, and who now lives and reigns with thee, *able to save unto the uttermost*‖ : to him, having done all, I would fly, with humble acknowledgment that I am an *unprofitable servant*¶ ; to him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

* Matt. vi. 13. † Amos viii. 7. ‡ Psal. cxli. 2.
§ Isai. xxxviii. 10. ‖ Heb. vii. 25. ¶ Luke xvii. 10.

CHAP. XXI.

A Caution against various Temptations, by which the young Convert may be drawn aside from the Course recommended above.

Dangers continue, after the first Difficulties (considered chap. xvi.) are broken through, §. 1. Particular Cautions, (1.) Against a sluggish and indolent Temper, §. 2. (2.) Against the excessive Love of sensitive Pleasure, §. 3. Leading to a Neglect of Business and needless Expence, §. 4. (3.) Against the Snares of vain Company, §. 5. (4.) Against excessive Hurries of worldly Business, §. 6. which is enforced by the fatal Consequences these have had in many Cases, §. 7. The Chapter concludes with an Exhortation to die to this World, and live to another, §. 8. And the young Convert's Prayer for Divine Protection against the Dangers arising from these Snares.

§. 1. THE representation I have been making of the pleasure and advantage of a life spent in devotedness to God and communion with him, as I have described it above, will I hope engage you, my dear reader, to form some purposes, and make some attempt to obtain it. But from considering the nature, and observing the course of things, it appears exceedingly evident, that besides the general opposition which I formerly mentioned as like to attend you in your first entrance on a religious life, you will find even after you have resolutely broke through this, a variety of hindrances in any attempts of exemplary piety, and in the prosecution of a remarkably strict and edifying course, will present themselves daily in your path. And whereas you may, by a few resolute efforts, baffle some of the former sort of enemies; these will be perpetually renewing their onsets, and a vigorous struggle must be continually maintained with them. Give me leave now therefore, to be particular in my caution against some of the chief of them. And here I would insist upon the difficulties, which will arise from indolence and the love of pleasure; from vain company, and from worldly cares. Each of these may prove insnaring to any, and especially to young persons, to whom I would now have some particular regard.

§. 2. I intreat you therefore, in the first place, that you will guard against a sluggish and indolent temper. The love of ease insinuates itself into the heart, under a variety of plausible pretences, which are often allowed to pass, when temptations of a grosser nature would not be admitted. The mispending a little time seems to wise and good men but a small matter; yet this sometimes runs them into great inconveniences. It often leads them to break in upon the seasons regularly allotted to devotion, and to defer business, which might

immediately be done, but being put off from day to day is not done at all; and thereby the services of life are at least diminished, and the rewards of eternity diminished proportionably: not to insist upon it, that very frequently this lays the soul open to farther temptations, by which it falls in consequence of being found unemployed. Be therefore suspicious of the first approaches of this kind. Remember, that the soul of man is an active being, and that it must find its pleasure in activity. *Gird up therefore the loins of your mind**. Endeavour to keep yourself always well employed. Be exact, if I may with humble reverence use the expression, in your appointments with God. Meet him early in the morning; and say not with the sluggard, when the proper hour of rising is come, *a little more sleep, a little more slumber*†. That time which prudence shall advise you, give to conversation and to other recreations. But when that is elapsed, and no unforeseen and important engagement presents, rise and be gone. Quit the company of your dearest friends, and retire to your proper business, whether it be in the field, the shop, or the closet. For by acting contrary to the secret dictates of your mind, as to what it is just at the present moment best to do, though it be but in the manner of spending half an hour, some degree of guilt is contracted, and a habit is cherished, which may draw after it much worse consequences. Consider therefore what duties are to be dispatched, and in what seasons. Form your plan as prudently as you can, and pursue it resolutely; unless any unexpected incident arises, which leads you to conclude, that duty calls you another way. Allowances for such unthought of interruptions must be made; but if in consequence of this, you are obliged to omit any thing of importance which you proposed to have done to-day, do it if possible to-morrow: and do not cut yourself out new work, till the former plan be dispatched, unless you really judge it, not merely more amusing, but more important. And always remember, that a servant of Christ should see to it, that he determine on these occasions, as in his master's presence.

§. 3. Guard also against an excessive love of sensitive and animal pleasure, as that which will be a great hindrance to you in that religious course, which I have now been urging. You cannot but know, that Christ has told us, *that a man must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, if he desire to become his disciple*‡. Christ the Son of God, *the former and the heir*

* 1 Pet. i. 13. † Prov. vi. 10. ‡ Luke ix. 23.

*of all things, pleased not himself**/ but submitted to wants, to difficulties, and hardships, in the way of duty, and some of them of the extremest kind and degree, for the glory of God and the salvation of men. In this way we are to follow him; and as we know not how soon we may be called, even to *resist unto blood, striving against sin*†, it is certainly best to accustom ourselves to that discipline, which we may possibly be called out to exercise, even in such rigorous heights. A soft and delicate life will give force to temptations, which might easily be subdued by one, who has habituated himself to *endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*‡. It also produces an attachment to this world, and an unwillingness to leave it; which ill becomes those who are *strangers and pilgrims on earth*, and who expect so soon to be called away to *that better country which they profess to seek*§. Add to this, that what the world calls a life of pleasure, is necessarily a life of expence too, and may perhaps lead you, as it has done many others, and especially many who have been setting out in the world, beyond the limits which providence has assigned; and so after a short course of indulgence, may produce a proportionable want. And while in other cases it is true, that pity should be shewn to the poor, this is a poverty that is justly contemptible, because it is the effect of a man's own folly; and when your *want* thus *comes upon you as an armed man*‖, you will not only find yourself stripped of the capacity you might otherwise have secured for performing those works of charity which are so ornamental to a christian profession, but probably will be under strong temptations to some low artifice or mean compliance, quite beneath the christian character, and that of an upright man. Many who once made a high profession, after a series of such sorry and scandalous shifts, have fallen into the infamy of bankrupts, and of the worst kind of bankrupts; I mean such as have lavished away on themselves what was indeed the property of others, and so have injured, and perhaps ruined, the industrious, to feed a foolish, luxurious, or ostentatious humour, which while indulged was the shame of their own families, and when it can be indulged no longer is their torment. This will be a terrible reproach to religion: such a reproach to it, that a good man would rather chuse to live on bread and water, or indeed to die for want of them, than to occasion it.

§. 4. Guard therefore, I beseech you, against any thing which might tend that way, especially by diligence in business,

* Rom. xv. 3. † Heb. xii. 4. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 3. § Heb. xi. 13—16. ‖ Prov. vi. 11.

and by prudence and frugality in expence, which by the divine blessing, may have a very happy influence to make your affairs prosperous, your health vigorous, and your mind easy. But this cannot be attained without keeping a resolute watch over yourself, and strenuously refusing to comply with many proposals, which indolence or sensuality will offer in very plausible forms, and for which it will plead, "that it asks but very little." Take heed, lest in this respect you imitate those fond parents, who by indulging their children in every little thing they have a mind to, encourage them by insensible degrees to grow still more incroaching, and imperious in their demands; as if they chose to be ruined with them, rather than to check them in what seems a trifle. Remember, and consider that excellent remark, sealed by the ruin of so many thousands: *He that despiseth small things shall fall by little and little.*

§. 5. In this view, give me leave also seriously and tenderly to caution you, my dear reader, against the snares of vain company. I speak not, as before, of that company, which is openly licentious and profane. I hope, there is something now in your temper and views, which would engage you to turn away from such with detestation and horror. But I beseech you, to consider, that those companions may be very dangerous, who might at first give you but very little alarm: I mean those, who though not the declared enemies of religion, and professed followers of vice and disorder, yet nevertheless have no practical sense of divine things on their hearts, so far as can be judged by their conversation and behaviour. You must often of necessity be with such persons, and christianity not only allows, but requires, that you should, on all expedient occasions of intercourse with them, treat them with civility and respect: but chuse not such for your most intimate friends, and do not contrive to spend most of your leisure moments among them. For such converse has a sensible tendency to alienate the soul from God, and to render it unfit for all spiritual communion with him. To convince you of this, do but reflect on your own experience, when you have been for many hours together among persons of such a character. Do you not find yourself more indisposed for devotional exercises? Do you not find your heart, by insensible degrees, more and more inclined to a conformity to this world, and to look with a secret disrelish on those objects and employments, to which reason directs as the noblest and the best? Observe the first symptoms, and guard against the snare in time: and for this purpose, endeavour to form friendships, founded in piety, and sup-

ported by it. *Be a companion of them that fear God, and of them that keep his precepts**. You well know, that in the sight of God they are the excellent of the earth; let them therefore *be all your delight*†. And that the peculiar benefit of their friendship may not be lost, endeavour to make the best of the hours you spend with them. The wisest of men has observed, that when "counsel in the heart of a man is *like deep waters;* that is, when it lies low and concealed, *a man of understanding will draw it out*‡. Endeavour therefore, on such occasions, so far as you can do it with decency and convenience, to give the conversation a religious turn. And when serious and useful subjects are started in your presence, lay hold of them, and cultivate them; and for that purpose *let the word of Christ dwell richly in you*§, and be continually made *the man of your counsel*‖.

§. 6. If it be so, it will secure you, not only from the snares of idleness and luxury, but from the contagion of every bad example. And it will also engage you to guard against those excessive hurries of worldly business, which would fill up all your time and thoughts, and thereby *choke the good word of God, and render it* in a great measure, if not quite *unfruitful*¶. Young people are generally of an enterprising disposition: having experienced comparatively little of the fatigue of business, and of the disappointments and incumbrances of life, they easily swallow them up, and annihilate them in their imagination, and fancy that their spirit, their application and address, will be able to encounter and surmount every obstacle or hindrance. But the event proves it otherwise. Let me intreat you, therefore, to be cautious how you plunge yourself into a greater variety of business than you are capable of managing as you ought, that is, in consistency with the care of your souls, and the service of God; which certainly ought not on any pretence to be neglected. It is true, indeed, that a prudent regard to your worldly interest would require such a caution; as it is obvious to every careful observer, that multitudes are undone, by grasping at more than they can conveniently manage. Hence it has frequently been seen, that while they have seemed resolved to be rich, they have *pierced themselves through with many sorrows***, have ruined their own families, and drawn down many others into desolation with them. Whereas, could they have been contented with moderate employments and moderate gains, they might have prospered in their business, and might by sure degrees, under a

* Psal. cxix. 63. † Psal. xvi. 3. ‡ Prov. xx. 5. § Col. iii. 16.
‖ Psal. cxix. 24. ¶ Matt. xiii. 22. ** 1 Tim. vi. 10.

divine blessing, have advanced to great and honourable increase. But if there were no danger at all to be apprehended on this head, if you were as certain of becoming rich and great, as you are of perplexing and fatiguing yourself in the attempt, consider, I beseech you, how precarious these enjoyments are. Consider, how often a plentiful *table becomes a snare, and that which should have been for a man's welfare, becomes a trap**. Forget not that short lesson, which is so comprehensive of the highest wisdom; *one thing is needful*†. Be daily thinking, while the gay and the great things of life are glittering before your eyes, how soon death will come, and impoverish you at once: how soon it will strip you of all possessions, but those which a naked soul can carry along with it into eternity, when it drops the body into the grave. Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! Carry the view of it about with you, if it be possible, through every hour of waking life; and be fully persuaded, that you have no business, no interest in life, that is inconsistent with it: for whatsoever would be injurious to this view, is not your business, is not your interest. You see, indeed, that the generality of men act as if they thought the great thing which God required of them, in order to secure his favour, was to get as much of the world as possible; at least as much as they can without any gross immorality, and without risking the loss of all, for making a little addition. And as if it were to abet this design, they tell others, and perhaps tell themselves, they only seek opportunities of greater usefulness. But in effect, if they mean any thing more by this, than a capacity of usefulness, which, when they have it, they will not exert, they generally deceive themselves; and, one way or another, it is a vain pretence. In most instances men seek the world,—either that they may hoard up riches, for the mean and scandalous satisfaction of looking upon them while they are living, and of thinking, that when they are dead it will be said of them, that they have left so many hundreds or thousands of pounds behind them; very probably, to insnare their children, or their heirs, (for the vanity is not peculiar to those who have children of their own:) or else, that they may lavish away their riches on their lusts, and drown themselves in a gulph of sensuality, in which, if reason be not lost, religion is soon swallowed up, and with it all the noblest pleasures which can enter into the heart of man. In this view, the generality of rich people appear to me objects of much greater compassion than the poor: especially as when

* Psal. lxix. 22. † Luke x. 42.

both live (which is frequently the case) without any fear of God before their eyes, the rich abuse the greater variety and abundance of his favours, and therefore will probably feel, in that world of future ruin which awaits impenitent sinners, a more exquisite sense of their misery.

§. 7. And let me observe to you, my dear reader, lest you should think yourself secure from any such danger, that we have great reason to apprehend, there are many now in a very wretched state, who once thought seriously of religion, when they were first setting out, in lower circumstances of life; but they have since forsaken God for mammon; and are now priding themselves in those golden chains, which in all probability, before it be long, will leave them to remain in those of darkness. When therefore an attachment to the world may be followed with such fatal consequences, *let not thine heart envy sinners* *; and do not, out of a desire of gaining what they have, be guilty of such folly as to expose yourself to this double danger of failing in the attempt, or of being undone by the success of it. Contract your desires; endeavour to be easy and content with a little: and if providence call you out to act in a larger sphere, submit to it in obedience to providence, but number it among the trials of life, which it will require a larger proportion of grace to bear well. For be assured, that as affairs and interests multiply, cares and duties will certainly increase, and probably disappointments and sorrows will increase in an equal proportion.

§. 8. On the whole, learn by divine grace, to die to the present world; to look upon it as a low state of being, which God never intended for the final and complete happiness, or the supreme care of any one of his children: a world, where something is indeed to be enjoyed, but chiefly from himself; where a great deal is to be borne with patience and resignation; and where some important duties are to be performed, and a course of discipline to be passed through, by which you are to be formed for a better state; to which as a christian you are near, and to which God will call you, perhaps on a sudden, but undoubtedly, if you hold on your way, in the fittest time and the most convenient manner. Refer therefore all this to him. Let your hopes and fears, your expectations and desires, with regard to this world, be kept as low as possible; and all your thoughts be united, as much as may be, in this one centre, What it is that God would, in present circumstances, have you

* Prov. xxiii. 17.

to be; and what is that method of conduct, by which you may most effectually please and glorify him!

The young Convert's Prayer for divine Protection, against the Danger of these Snares.

"BLESSED God! In the midst of ten thousand snares and dangers, which surround me from without and from within, permit me to look up unto thee with my humble intreaty, that thou wouldst *deliver me from them that rise up against me**, and that *thine eyes may be upon me for good*† / When sloth and indolence are ready to seize me, awaken me from that idle dream, with lively and affectionate views of that invisible and eternal world, to which I am tending! Remind me of what infinite importance it is, that I diligently improve these transient moments, which thou hast allotted to me as the time of my preparation for it!

"When *sinners entice me, may I not consent*‡! May holy converse with God give me a disrelish for the converse of those who are strangers to thee, and who would separate my soul from thee! May I *honour them that fear the Lord*§, and walking with such wise and holy men, may I find I am daily advancing in wisdom and holiness‖! Quicken me, O Lord, by their means; that by me thou mayest also quicken others! Make me the happy instrument of enkindling and animating the flame of divine love in their breasts; and may it catch from heart to heart, and grow every moment in its progress!

"Guard me, O Lord, from the love of sensual pleasure! May I seriously remember, that *to be carnally minded is death* ¶! May it please thee, therefore, to purify and refine my soul by the influences of thine Holy Spirit, that I may always shun unlawful gratifications, more solicitously than others pursue them; and that those indulgences of animal nature, which thou hast allowed, and which the constitution of things render necessary, may be soberly and moderately used! May I still remember the superior dignity of my spiritual and intelligent nature, and may the pleasures of the man and the christian be sought as my noblest happiness! May my soul rise on the wings of holy contemplation, to the regions of invisible glory; and may I be endeavouring to form myself, under the influences of divine grace, for the entertainments of those angelic spirits, that live in

* Psal. lix. 1. † Jer. xxiv. 6. ‡ Prov. i. 10.
§ Psal. xv. 4. ‖ Prov. xiii. 20. ¶ Rom. viii. 6.

thy presence in a happy incapacity of those gross delights, by which spirits dwelling in flesh are so often insnared, and in which they so often lose the memory of their high original, and of those noble hopes, which alone are proportionable to it!

"Give me, O Lord, to know the station in which thou hast fixed me, and steadily to pursue the duties of it! But deliver me from those excessive cares of this world, which would so engross my time and my thoughts, that the one thing needful should be forgotten! May my desires after worldly possessions be moderated, by considering their uncertain and unsatisfying nature; and while others are laying up *treasures on earth, may I be rich towards God*!* May I never be too busy to attend to those great affairs, which lie between thee and my soul; never be so engrossed with the concerns of time, as to neglect the interests of eternity! May I pass through earth with my heart and hopes set upon heaven, and feel the attractive influence stronger and stronger, as I approach still nearer and nearer to that desirable centre; till the happy moment come, when every earthly object shall disappear from my view, and the shining glories of the heavenly world shall fill my improved and strengthened sight, which shall then be cheered with that which would now overwhelm me! Amen."

CHAP. XXII.

The Case of spiritual Decay and Languor in Religion.

Declensions in Religion, and Relapses into Sin, with their sorrowful consequences, are in the general too probable, §. 1, The Case of Declension and Languor in Religion described, negatively; §. 2. and positively: §. 3. as discovering itself, (1.) By a Failure in the Duties of the Closet, §. 4. (2.) By a Neglect of Social Worship, §. 5. (3.) By Want of Love to our Fellow-christians, §. 6. (4.) By an undue Attachment to sensual Pleasures, or secular Cares, §. 7. (5.) By Prejudices against some important Principles in Religion; §. 8. A Symptom peculiarly sad and dangerous, §. 9, 11. Directions for Recovery, §. 11. Immediately to be pursued, §. 12. A Prayer for one under spiritual Decays.

§. 1. IF I am so happy as to prevail upon you in the exhortations and cautions I have given, you will probably go on with pleasure and comfort in religion; and your path will generally be *like the morning light, which shineth more and more until the perfect day*†. Yet I dare not flatter myself with an

* Luke xii. 21. † Prov. iv. 18.

expectation of such success, as shall carry you above those varieties in temper, conduct, and state, which have been more or less the complaint of the best of men. Much do I fear, that how warmly soever your heart may now be impressed with the representation I have been making, though the great objects of your faith and hope continue unchangeable, your temper towards them will be changed. Much do I fear, that you will feel your mind languish and tire in the good ways of God; nay, that you may be prevailed upon to take some step out of them, and may thus fall a prey to some of those temptations, which you now look upon with a holy scorn. The probable consequence of this will be, that God will hide his face from you; that he will stretch forth his afflicting hand against you; and that you still will see your sorrowful moments, how cheerfully soever you may now be *rejoicing in the Lord, and joying in the God of your salvation**. I hope therefore it may be of some service, if this too probable event should happen, to consider these cases a little more particularly: and I heartily pray, that God would make what I shall say concerning them, the means of restoring, comforting, and strengthening your soul, if he ever suffers you in any degree to deviate from him.

§. 2. We will first consider the case of spiritual declension, and languor in religion. And here I desire, that, before I proceed any farther, you would observe, that I do not comprehend under this head every abatement of that fervour, which a young convert may find when he first becomes experimentally acquainted with divine things. Our natures are so framed, that the novelty of objects strikes them in something of a peculiar manner: not to urge, how much more easily our passions are impressed in the earlier years of life, than when we are more advanced in the journey of it. This, perhaps, is not sufficiently considered. Too great a stress is commonly laid on the flow of affections; and in consequence of this a christian who is ripened in grace, and greatly advanced in his preparation for glory, may sometimes be ready to lament imaginary rather than real decays, and to say, without any just foundation, *Oh that it were with me as in months past*† *!* Therefore, you can hardly be too frequently told, that religion consists chiefly, "in the resolution of the will for God, and in a constant care to avoid whatever we are persuaded he would disapprove, to dispatch the work he has assigned us in life, and to promote his glory in the happiness of

* Isai. lxi. 10. † Job xxix. 2.

mankind." To this we are chiefly to attend, looking in all to the simplicity and purity of those motives from which we act, which we know are chiefly regarded by that God who searches the heart; humbling ourselves before him at the same time under a sense of our many imperfections, and flying to the blood of Christ and the grace of the gospel.

§. 3. Having given this precaution, I will now a little more particularly describe the case, which I call the state of a christian who is declining in religion; so far as it does not fall in with those, which I shall consider in the following chapters. And I must observe that it chiefly consists, "in a forgetfulness of divine objects, and a remissness in those various duties, to which we stand engaged by that solemn surrender, which we have made of ourselves to the service of God." There will be a variety of symptoms, according to the different circumstances and relations in which the christian is placed; but some will be of a more universal kind. It will be peculiarly proper to touch on these; and so much the rather, as these declensions are often unobserved, like the grey hairs which were *upon Ephraim, when he knew it not**.

§. 4. Should you, my good reader, fall into this state, it will probably first discover itself by a failure of the duties of the closet. Not that I suppose, they will at first, or certainly conclude, that they will at all, be wholly omitted: but they will be run over in a cold and formal manner. Sloth, or some of those other snares which I cautioned you against in the former chapter, will so far prevail upon you, that though perhaps you know and recollect, that the proper season of retirement is come, you will sometimes indulge yourself upon your bed in the morning, sometimes in conversation or business in the evening, so as not to have convenient time for it. Or perhaps, when you come into your closet at that season, some favourite book you are desirous to read, some correspondence that you chuse to carry on, or some other amusement will present itself, and plead to be dispatched first. This will probably take up more time than you imagined; and then secret prayer will be hurried over, and perhaps reading the scripture quite neglected. You will plead perhaps that it is but for once: but the same allowance will be made a second and a third time; and it will grow more easy and familiar to you each time, than it was the last. And thus God will be mocked, and your own soul will be defrauded of its spiritual meals, if I may be allowed the

* Hos. vii. 9.

expression; the word of God will be slighted, and self-examination quite disused; and secret prayer itself will grow a burden, rather than a delight: a trifling ceremony rather than a devout homage fit for the acceptance of our Father who is in heaven.

§. 5. If immediate and resolute measures be not taken for your recovery from these declensions, they will spread farther, and reach the acts of social worship. You will feel the effect in your families, and in public ordinances. And if you do not feel it, the symptoms will be so much the worse. Wandering thoughts will (as it were) eat out the very heart of these duties. It is not, I believe, the privilege of the most eminent christians, to be entirely free from them: but probably in these circumstances, you will find but few intervals of strict attention, or of any thing which wears the appearance of inward devotion. And when these heartless duties are concluded, there will scarce be a reflection made, how little God hath been enjoyed in them. how little he hath been honoured by them. Perhaps the sacrament of the Lord's-supper, being so admirably adapted to fix the attention of the soul, and to excite its warmest exercise of holy affections, may be the last ordinance in which these declensions will be felt. And yet, who can say, that the sacred table is a privileged place? Having been unnecessarily straitened in your peparations, you will attend with less fixedness and enlargement of heart than usual. And perhaps a dissatisfaction in the review, when there has been a remarkable alienation or insensibility of mind, may occasion a disposition to forsake your place and your duty there. And when your spiritual enemies have once gained this point upon you, it is probable you will fall by swifter degrees than ever, and your resistance to their attempts will grow weaker and weaker.

§. 6. When your love to God our Father, and to the Lord Jesus Christ fails, your fervour of christian affection to your brethren in Christ will proportionably decline, and your concern for usefulness in life abate; especially, where any thing is to be done for spiritual edification. You will find one excuse or another, for the neglect of religious discourse, perhaps not only among neighbours and christian friends, when very convenient opportunities offer; but even with regard to those, who are members of your own families, and to those, who, if you are fixed in the superior relations of life, are committed to your care.

§. 7. With this remissness, an attachment, either to sensual pleasure, or to wordly business, will increase. For the soul must have something to employ it, and something to delight itself in: and as it turns to one or the other of these, tempta-

tions of one sort or another will present themselves. In some instances, perhaps the strictest bounds of temperance, and the regular appointments of life may be broken in upon through a fondness for company, and the entertainments which often attend it. In other instances, the interests of life appearing greater than they did before, and taking up more of the mind, contrary interests of other persons may throw you into disquietude, or plunge you in debate and contention, in which it is extremely difficult to preserve either the serenity, or the innocency of the soul. And perhaps, if ministers and other christian friends observe this, and endeavour in a plain and faithful way to reduce you from your wandering, a false delicacy of mind, often contracted in such a state as this, will render these attempts extremely disagreeable. The ulcer of the soul (if I may be allowed the expression,) will not bear being touched, when it most needs it; and one of the most generous and self-denying instances of christian friendship shall be turned into an occasion of coldness and distaste, yea, perhaps of enmity.

§. 8. And possibly, to sum up all, this disordered state of mind may lead you into some prejudices against those very principles, which might be most effectual for your recovery: and your great enemy may succeed so far in his attempts against you, as to persuade you, that you have lost nothing in religion, when you have almost lost all. He may very probably lead you to conclude, that your former devotional frames were mere fits of enthusiasm; and that the holy regularity of your walk before God, was an unnecessary strictness and scrupulosity. Nay, you may think it a great improvement in understanding, that you have learnt from some new masters, that if a man treat his fellow-creatures with humanity and good-nature, judging and reviling those only who would disturb others by the narrowness of their notions, (for these are generally exempted from other objects of the most universal and disinterested benevolence so often boasted of,) he must necessarily be in a very good state, though he pretend not to converse much with God, provided that he think respectfully of him, and do not provoke him by any gross immoralities.

§. 9. I mention this in the last stage of religious declensions, because I apprehend that to be its proper place; and I fear, it will be found by experience to stand upon the very confines of that gross apostacy into deliberate and presumptuous sin, which will claim our consideration under the next head. And because too, it is that symptom, which most effectually tends to prevent the success, and even the use of any proper remedies, in con-

sequence of a fond and fatal apprehension, that they are needless. It is, if I may borrow the simile, like those fits of lethargic drowsiness, which often precede apoplexies and death.

§. 10. It is by no means my design at this time to reckon up, much less to consider at large, those dangerous principles which are now ready to posses the mind, and to lay the foundation of a false and treacherous peace. Indeed they are in different instances various, and sometimes run into opposite extremes. But if God awaken you to read your Bible with attention, and give you to feel the spirit with which it is written, almost every page will flash in conviction upon the mind, and spread a light to scatter and disperse these shades of darkness.

§. 11. What I chiefly intend in this address, is to engage you, if possible, as soon as you perceive the first symptoms of these declensions, to be upon your guard, and to endeavour as speedily as possible to recover yourself from them. And I would remind you, that the remedy must begin, where the first cause or complaint prevailed, I mean, in the closet. Take some time for recollection, and ask your own conscience seriously, How matters stand between the blessed God, and your soul? Whether they are as they once were, and as you could wish them to be, if you saw your life just drawing to a period, and were to pass immediately into the eternal state? One serious thought of eternity, shames a thousand vain excuses, with which, in the forgetfulness of it, we are ready to delude our own souls. And when you feel that secret misgiving of heart, which will naturally arise on this occasion, do not endeavour to palliate the matter, and to find out slight and artful coverings, for what you cannot forbear secretly condemning; but honestly fall under the conviction, and be humbled for it. Pour out your heart before God, and seek the renewed influences of his spirit and grace. Return with more exactness to secret devotion, and to self-examination. Read the scripture with yet greater diligence, and especially the more devotional and spiritual parts of it. Labour to ground it in your heart, and to feel, what you have reason to believe the sacred penmen felt when they wrote, so far as circumstances may agree. Open your soul with all simplicity, to every lesson which the word of God would teach you; and guard against those things, which you perceive to alienate your mind from inward religion, though there be nothing criminal in the things themselves. They may perhaps in the general be lawful; to some possibly they may be expedient; but if they produce such an effect as was mentioned above, it is certain they are not convenient for you. In these circumstances,

above all seek the converse of those christians, whose progress in religion seems most remarkable, and who adorn their profession in the most amiable manner. Labour to obtain their temper and sentiments, and lay open your case and your heart to them, with all the freedom which prudence will permit. Employ yourself at seasons of leisure, in reading practical and devotional books, in which the mind and heart of the pious author is transfused into the work, and in which you can (as it were) taste the genuine spirit of christianity. And to conclude, take the first opportunity that presents, of making an approach to the table of the Lord, and spare neither time, nor pains, in the most serious preparation for it. There renew your covenant with God; put your soul anew into the hand of Christ, and endeavour to view the wonders of his dying love, in such a manner as may rekindle the languishing flame, and quicken you to more vigorous resolutions than ever, *to live unto him who died for you**. And watch over your own heart, that the good impressions you then feel, may continue. Rest not, till you have obtained as confirmed a state in religion, as you ever knew. Rest not, till you have made a greater progress than before: for it is certain, more is yet behind; and it is only by a zeal to go forwards, that you can be secure from the danger of going backward, and revolting more and more.

§. 12. I only add, that it is necessary to take these precautions as soon as possible; or you will probably find a much swifter progress than you are aware in the down-hill road; and you may possibly be left of God, to fall into some gross and aggravated sin, so as to fill your consciences with an agony and horror, which the pain of *broken bones*†, can but imperfectly express.

A Prayer for one under spiritual Decays.

"ETERNAL and unchangeable Jehovah! Thy perfections and glories are like thy being, immutable. Jesus thy Son is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*‡. The eternal world to which I am hastening, is always equally important, and presses upon the attentive mind for a more fixed and solemn regard, in proportion to the degree in which it comes nearer and nearer. But alas, my views, and my affections, and my best resolutions are continually varying, like this poor body, which goes through daily and hourly alterations in its state and circumstances. Whence, O Lord, whence this sad change

* 2 Cor. v. 15. † Psal. li. 8. ‡ Heb. xiii. 8.

which I now experience, in the frame and temper of my mind towards thee? Whence this alienation of my soul from thee? Why can I not come to thee with all the endearments of filial love, as I once could? Why is thy service so remissly attended, if attended at all? And why are the exercises of it, which were once my greatest pleasure, become a burden to me? *Where, O God is the blessing I once spake of* *, when my joy in thee as my heavenly Father, was so conspicuous, that strangers might have observed it, and when my heart did so overflow with love to thee, and with zeal for thy service, that it was matter of self-denial to me, to limit and restrain the genuine expressions of these strong emotions of my soul, even where prudence and duty require it?

"Alas, Lord, whither am I fallen! Thine eye sees me still; but Oh how unlike what it once saw me! Cold and insensible as I am, I must blush on the reflection.—Thou *seest me in secret*†, and seest me perhaps, often amusing myself with trifles, in those seasons, which I used solemnly to devote to thine immediate service. Thou seest me coming into thy presence as by constraint; and when I am before thee, so straitened in my spirit, that I hardly know what to say to thee, though thou art the God with whom I have to do; and though the keeping up an humble and dutiful correspondence with thee, is beyond all comparison the most important business of my life. And even when I am speaking to thee, with how much coldness and formality is it? It is perhaps the work of the imagination, the labour of the lips: but where are those ardent desires, those intense breathings after God, which I once felt? Where is that pleasing repose in thee, which I was once conscious of, as being near my divine rest, as being happy in that nearness, and resolving that if possible, I would no more be removed from it? But Oh, how far am I removed? When these short devotions, if they may be called devotions, are over, in what long intervals do I forget thee, and appear so little animated with thy love, so little devoted to thy service, that a stranger might converse with me a considerable time, without knowing that I had ever formed any acquaintance with thee, without discovering that I had so much as known or heard any thing of God? Thou callest me to thine house, O Lord, on thine own day; but how heartless are my services there? I offer thee no more than a carcase. My thoughts and affections are engrossed with other objects, while I *draw near thee with my mouth, and honour thee*

* Gal. iv. 15. † Mat vi. 6.

*with my lips**. Thou callest me to thy table; but my heart is so frozen, that it hardly melts even at the foot of the cross; hardly feels any efficacy in the blood of Jesus. Oh wretched creature that I am! Unworthy of being called thine! Unworthy of a place among thy children, or of the meanest situation in thy family; rather worthy to be forsaken, yea, to be utterly destroyed!

"Is this, Lord, the service which I once promised, and which thou hast so many thousand reasons to expect? Are these the returns I am making, for thy daily providential care, for the sacrifice of thy Son, for the communications of thy spirit for the pardon of my numberless aggravated sins, for the hopes, the undeserved, and so often forfeited hopes, of eternal glory? Lord, I am ashamed to stand or to kneel before thee. But pity me, I beseech thee, and help me: for I am a pitiable object indeed; my soul cleaveth unto the dust, and lays itself as in the dust before thee; but Oh, *quicken me according to thy word*†! Let me trifle no longer, for I am upon the brink of a precipice! I am thinking of my ways, Oh give me grace to *turn my feet unto thy testimonies*; to make haste without any farther delay, *that I may keep thy commandments*‡! *Search me O Lord, and try me*§! Go to the first root of this distemper, which spreads itself over my soul; and recover me from it! Represent sin unto me, O Lord, I beseech thee, that I may see it with abhorrence! and represent the Lord Jesus Christ to me in such a light, that I may *look upon him and mourn*‖; that I may look upon him and love! May I awaken from this stupid lethargy, into which I am sinking; and may Christ give me more abundant degrees of spiritual life and activity, than I have ever yet received! And may I be so quickened and animated by him, that I may more than recover the ground I have lost, and may make a more speedy and exemplary progress, than in my best days I have ever yet done! Send down upon me, O Lord, in a more rich and abundant effusion, thy good Spirit! May he *dwell in me as in a temple which he has consecrated to himself*¶! and while all the service is directed and governed by him, may *holy and acceptable sacrifices be continually offered***! May the incense be constant, and may it be fragrant! May the sacred *fire burn and blaze perpetually*††; and may none of its vessels ever be profaned, by being employed to an unholy or forbidden use! Amen."

* Isai. xxix. 13. † Psal. cxix. 25. ‡ Psal. cxix. 59, 60. § Psal. cxxxix. 23.
‖ Zech. xii. 10. ¶ 1 Cor. iii. 16 ** Rom. xii. 1. †† Lev. vi. 13.

CHAP. XXIII.

The sad Case of a Relapse into known and deliberate Sin, after solemn Acts of Dedication to God, and some Progress made in Religion.

Unthought-of Relapses may happen, §. 1. and bring the Soul into a miserable Case, §. 2. Yet the Case is not desperate, §. 3. The Backslider urged immediately to return: (1.) By deep Humiliation before God for so aggravated an Offence, §. 4. (2.) By renewed Regards to the divine Mercy in Christ, §. 5. (3.) By an open Profession of Repentance, where the Crime hath given public Offence, §. 6. (4.) Falls to be reviewed for future Caution, §. 7. The Chapter concludes, §. 8. with a Prayer for the Use of one who hath fallen into gross Sins, after religious Resolutions and Engagements.

§. 1. THE declensions which I have described in the foregoing chapter, must be acknowledged worthy of deep lamentation: but happy will you be, my dear reader, if you never know, by experience, a circumstance yet more melancholy than this. Perhaps when you consider the view of things which you now have, you imagine that no considerations can ever bribe you, in any single instance, to act contrary to the present dictates or suggestions of your conscience, and of the spirit of God as setting it on work. No: you think it would be better for you to die. And you think rightly, but Peter thought, and said so too: *Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee*:* and yet, after all, he fell, and therefore *be not high minded but fear*†. It is not impossible, but you may fall into that very sin, of which you imagine you are least in danger, or into that against which you have most solemnly resolved, and of which you have already most bitterly repented. You may relapse into it again and again. But, Oh, if you do, nay, if you should deliberately and presumptuously fall but once, how deep will it pierce your heart! How dear will you pay for all the pleasure, with which the temptation has been baited! How will this separate between God and you! What a desolation, what a dreadful desolation will it spread over your soul! It is grievous to think of it. Perhaps in such a state you may feel more agony and distress in your own conscience, when you come seriously to reflect, than you ever felt when you were first awakened and reclaimed; because the sin will be attended with some very

* Mat. xxvi. 35. † Rom. xi. 20.

high aggravations, beyond those of your unregenerate state. I well knew the person that said, "The agonies of a sinner, in the first pangs of his repentance, were not to be mentioned on the same day, with those of a backslider in heart, when he comes to be *filled with his own way**."

§. 2. Indeed it is enough to wound one's heart to think how yours will be wounded: how all your comforts, all your evidences, all your hopes will be clouded: what thick darkness will spread itself on every side, so that neither sun, nor moon, nor stars, will appear in your heaven. Your spiritual consolations will be gone; and your temporal enjoyments will also be rendered tasteless and insipid. And if afflictions be sent, as they probably may, in order to reclaim you, a consciousness of guilt will sharpen and envenom the dart. Then will the enemy of your soul with all his art and power rise up against you, encouraged by your fall, and labouring to trample you down in utter hopeless ruin. He will persuade you, that you are already undone beyond recovery. He will suggest, that it signifies nothing to attempt it any more; for that every effort, every amendment, every act of repentance, will but make your case so much the worse, and plunge you lower and lower into hell.

§. 3. Thus will he endeavour by terrors to keep you from that sure remedy, which yet remains. But yield not to him. Your case will indeed be sad; and if it be now your case, it is deplorably so; and to rest in it, would be still much worse. Your heart would be hardened yet more and more; and nothing could be expected, but sudden and aggravated destruction. Yet blessed be God, it is not quite hopeless. Your *wounds are corrupted, because of your foolishness*†; but the gangrene is not incurable. *There is balm in Gilead, there is a physician there*‡. Do not therefore render your condition indeed hopeless, by now saying, *There is no hope*§, and drawing a fatal argument from that false supposition for going after the idols you have loved. Let me address you, in the language of God to his backsliding people, when they were ready to apprehend that to be their case, and to draw such a conclusion from it: *Only return unto me, saith the Lord*‖. Cry for renewed grace; and in the strength of it labour to return. Cry with David, under the like guilt, *I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments*¶; and that remembrance of them is, I hope, a token for good. But if

* Prov. xiv. 14. † Psal. xxxviii. 5. ‡ Jer. viii. 22.
§ Jer. ii. 25. ‖ Jer. iii. 13. ¶ Psal. cxix. 176.

thou wilt return at all, do it immediately. Take not one step more in that fatal path, to which thou hast turned aside. Think not to add one sin more to the account, and then to repent; as if it would be but the same thing on the whole. The second error may be worse than the first; it may make way for another and another, and draw on a terrible train of consequences, beyond all you can now imagine. Make haste, therefore, and do not delay. *Escape, and fly, as for thy life**, *before the dart strike through thy liver*†. *Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids*‡: lie not down upon thy bed under unpardoned guilt, lest evil overtake thee, lest the sword of divine justice should smite thee; and whilst thou purposest to return to-morrow, thou shouldst this night go and take possession of hell.

§. 4. Return immediately; and permit me to add, return solemnly. Some very pious and excellent divines have expressed themselves upon this head, in a manner which seems liable to dangerous abuse; when they urge men after a fall, "not to stay to survey the ground, nor consider how they came to be thrown down, but immediately to get up and renew the race." In slighter cases the advice is good: but when conscience has suffered such violent outrage, by the commission of known, wilful, and deliberate sin, (a case, which one would hope, should but seldom happen to those who have once sincerely entered on a religious course,) I can by no means think, that either reason or scripture encourage such a method. Especially would it be improper, if the action itself has been of so heinous a nature, that even to have fallen into it on the most sudden surprise of temptation must have greatly shamed, and terrified, and distressed the soul. Such an affair is dreadfully solemn, and should be treated accordingly. If this has been the sad case with you, my then unhappy reader, I would pity you, and mourn over you; and would beseech you, as you tender your peace, your recovery, the health, and the very life of your soul, that you would not loiter away an hour. Retire immediately for serious reflection. Break through other engagements and employments, unless they be such as you cannot in conscience delay for a few hours, which can seldom happen in the circumstance I now suppose. This is the one thing needful. Set yourself to it therefore, in the presence of God, and hear at large patiently and humbly what conscience has to say, though it chide and reproach severely. Yea, earnestly pray, that God would speak

* Gen. xix. 17. † Prov. vii. 23. ‡ Prov. vi. 4.

to you by conscience, and make you more thoroughly to know and feel, *what an evil and bitter thing it is, that you have thus forsaken him**. Think of all the aggravating circumstances attending your offence; and especially think of those, which arise from abused mercy and goodness; which arise, not only from your solemn vows and engagements to God, but from the views you have had of a Redeemer's love, sealed even in blood. And are these the returns? Was it not enough that Christ should have been thus injured by his enemies? Must he be *wounded in the house of his friends too*† ? Were you *delivered to work such abominations as these*‡ ? Did the blessed Jesus groan and die for you, that you might sin with boldness and freedom, that you might extract, as it were, the very spirit and essence of sin, and offend God to a height of ingratitude and baseness, which would otherwise have been in the nature of things impossible? Oh think, how justly God might cast you out from his presence! How justly he might number you among the most signal instances of his vengeance! And think, how *your heart would endure, or your hands be strong, if he should deal thus with you*§ ? Alas! all your former experiences would enhance your sense of the ruin and misery, that must be felt in an eternal banishment from the divine presence and favour.

§. 5. Indulge such reflections as these. Stand the humbling sight of your sins in such a view as this. The more odious and the more painful it appears, the greater prospect there will be of your benefit by attending to it. But the matter is not to rest here. All these reflections are intended, not to grieve, but to cure; and to grieve no more than may promote the cure. You are indeed to look upon sin; but you are also, in such a circumstance, if ever, to look upon Christ; to *look upon him, whom you have now pierced deeper than before, and to mourn for him with sincerity and tenderness*‖. The God whom you have injured and affronted, whose laws you have broken, and whose justice you have (as it were) challenged by this foolish wretched apostacy, is nevertheless *a most merciful God*¶. You cannot be so ready to return to him, as he is to receive you. Even now does he, as it were, solicit a reconciliation, by those tender impressions, which he is making upon your heart. But remember, how he will be reconciled. It is in the very same way, in which you made your first approach to him; in the name and for the sake of his dear Son. Come therefore in an humble

* Jer. ii. 19. † Zech. xiii. 6. ‡ Jer. vii. 10.
§ Ezek. xxii. 14. ‖ Zech. xii. 10. ¶ Deut. iv. 31.

dependance upon him. Renew your application to Jesus, that his blood may (as it were) be sprinkled upon your soul, that your soul may thereby be purified, and your guilt removed. This very sin of yours, which the blessed God foresaw, increased the weight of your Redeemer's sufferings: it was concerned in shedding his blood. Humbly go, and place your wounds, as it were, under the droppings of that precious balm, by which alone they can be healed. That compassionate Saviour will delight to restore you, when you lie as an humble suppliant at his feet, and will graciously take part with you in that peace and pleasure which he gives. Through him renew your covenant with God, that broken covenant, the breach of which divine justice might teach you to know *by terrible things in righteousness* *: But mercy allows of an accommodation. Let the consciousness and remembrance of that breach engage you to enter into covenant anew, under a deeper sense than ever, of your own weakness, and a more cordial dependance on divine grace for your security, than you have ever yet entertained. I know you will be ashamed to present yourself among the children of God in his sanctuary, and especially at his table, under a consciousness of so much guilt: but break through that shame, if providence open you the way. You would be humbled before your offended Father: but surely there is no place where you are more like to be humbled, than when you see yourself in his house, and no ordinance administered there, can lay you lower than that in which *Christ is evidently set forth as crucified before your eyes*†. Sinners are the only persons who have business there. The best men come to that sacred table, as sinners. As such make your approach to it: yea, as the greatest of sinners; as one who needs the blood of Jesus, as much as any creature upon earth.

§. 6. And let me remind you of one thing more. If your fall has been of such a nature as to give any scandal to others, be not at all concerned to save appearances, and to moderate those mortifications which deep humiliation before them would occasion. The depth and pain of that mortification is indeed an excellent medicine, which God has in his wise goodness appointed for you in such circumstances as these. In such a case, confess your fault with the greatest frankness: aggravate it to the utmost: intreat pardon, and prayer, from those whom you have offended. Then, and never till then, will you be in the way to peace: Not by palliating a fault, not by making ex-

* Psal. lxv. 5. † Gal. iii. 1.

cuses, not by objecting to the manner in which others may have treated you; as if the least excess of rigour in a faithful admonition were a crime equal to some great immorality that occasioned it. This can only proceed from the madness of pride and self-love: it is the sensibility of a wound, which is hardened, swelled, and inflamed; and it must be reduced, and cooled and suppled, before it can possibly be cured. To be censured, and condemned by men, will be but a little grievance, to a soul thoroughly humbled and broken under a sense of having incurred the condemning sentence of God. Such a one will rather desire to glorify God, by submitting to deserved blame; and will fear deceiving others into a more favourable opinion of him, than he inwardly knows himself to deserve. These are the sentiments which God gives to the sincere penitent in such a case; and by this means he restores him to that credit and regard among others, which he does not know how to seek, but which nevertheless, for the sake both of his comfort and usefulness, God wills that he should have; and which it is, humanly speaking, impossible for him to recover any other way. But there is something so honourable in the frank acknowledgment of a fault, and in deep humiliation for it, that all who see it must needs approve it. They pity an offender, who is brought to such a disposition; and endeavour to comfort him with returning expressions, not only of their love, but of their esteem too.

§. 7. Excuse this digression, which may suit some cases; and which would suit many more, if a regular discipline were to be exercised in churches: for on such a supposition, the Lord's supper could not be approached after visible and scandalous falls, without solemn confession of the offence, and declarations of repentance. On the other hand, there may be instances of sad apostacy, where the crime, though highly aggravated before God, may not fall under human notice. In this case, remember, that your business is with him, to whose piercing eye every thing appears in its just light: before him therefore prostrate your soul, and seek a solemn reconciliation with him, confirmed by the memorials of his dying Son. And when this is done, imagine not, that because you have received the tokens of pardon, the guilt of your apostacy is to be forgot at once. Bear it still in your memory for future caution: lament it before God, in the frequent returns of secret devotion especially: and view with humiliation the scars of those wounds which your own folly occasioned, even when by divine grace they are thoroughly healed. For God establishes his covenant, not to remove the sense of every past abomination, but *that thou mayest remember*

*thy ways, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, even when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.**

§. 8. And now, upon the whole, if you desire to attain such a temper, and to return by such steps as these, then immediately fall down before God, and pour out your heart in his presence, in language like this.

A Prayer for one who has fallen into gross Sin, after Religious Resolutions and Engagements.

"O MOST Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God! When I seriously reflect on thy spotless purity, and on the strict and impartial methods of thy steady administration, together with that almighty power of thine, which is able to carry every thought of thine heart into immediate and full execution, I may justly appear before thee this day with shame and terror, in confusion and consternation of spirit. This day, O my God, this dark mournful day, would I take occasion to look back to that sad source of our guilt, and our misery, the apostacy of our common parents, and say with thine offending servant David, *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me*†. This day would I lament all the fatal consequences of such a descent, with regard to myself. And Oh how many have they been!—The remembrance of the sins of my unconverted state, and the failings and infirmities of my after life, may justly confound me! How much more such a scene, as now lies before my conscience, and before thine all-seeing eye! For thou, O Lord, knowest my foolishness, and all *my sins are not hid from thee*‡. *Thou tellest all my wanderings from thy statutes*§: thou seest, and thou recordest, every instance of my disobedience to thee, and of my rebellion against thee: thou seest it in every aggravated circumstance which I can discern, and in many more which I have never observed or reflected upon. How then shall I appear in thy presence, or *lift up my face to thee*‖! *I am full of confusion*¶, and feel a secret regret in the thought of applying to thee: But, O Lord, *to whom should I go, but unto thee***? Unto thee, on whom depends my life or my death; unto thee, who alone canst take away the burden of guilt, which now presses me down to the dust; who alone canst restore to my

* Ezek. xvi. 63. † Psal. li. 5. ‡ Psal. lxix. 5. § Psal. lvi. 8.
‖ Ezra. ix. 6. ¶ Job x. 15. ** John vi. 68.

soul that rest and peace which I have lost, and which I deserve for ever to lose.

"Behold me, O Lord God, falling down at thy feet! Behold me pleading guilty in thy presence, and surrendering myself to that justice which I cannot escape! I have not one word to offer in my own vindication, in my own excuse. Words, far from being able to clear up my innocence, can never sufficiently describe the enormity and demerit of my sin. Thou, O Lord, and thou only knowest to the full, how heinous and how aggravated it is. Thine infinite understanding alone, can fathom the infinite depth of its malignity. I am, on many accounts, most unable to do it. I cannot conceive the glory of thy sacred Majesty, whose authority I have despised, nor the number and variety of those mercies, which I have sinned against. I cannot conceive the value of the blood of thy dear Son, which I have ungratefully trampled under my feet; nor the dignity of that blessed spirit of thine, whose agency I have, as far as I could, been endeavouring to oppose, and whose work I have been, as with all my might, labouring to undo, and to tear up (as it were) that plantation of his grace, which I should rather have been willing to have guarded with my life, and watered with my blood. Oh the baseness and madness of my conduct! That I should thus, as it were, rend open the wounds of my soul, of which I had died long e'er this, had not thine own hand applied a remedy, had not thine only Son bled to prepare it! That I should violate the covenant I have *made with thee by sacrifice**, by the memorials of such a sacrifice too, even of Jesus, my Lord, whereby I am become *guilty of his body and blood*†! That I should bring such dishonour upon religion too, by so unsuitable a walk, and perhaps open the mouths of its greatest enemies to insult it upon my account, and prejudice some against it to their everlasting destruction!

I wonder, O Lord God, that I am here to own all this. I wonder, that thou hast not long ago appeared *as a swift witness against me*‡; that thou hast not discharged the thunderbolts of thy flaming wrath against me, and crushed me into Hell; making me there a terror to all about me, as well as to myself, by a vengeance and ruin, to be distinguished even there, where all are miserable, and all hopeless.

"O God, thy patience is marvellous! But how much more marvellous is thy grace, which after all this, invites me to thee! While I am here giving judgment against myself, that I deserve

* Psal. l. 5. † 1 Cor. xi. 27. ‡ Mal. iii. 5.

to die, to die for ever, thou art sending me the words of everlasting life, and *calling me, as a backsliding child, to return unto thee**. Behold therefore, O Lord, invited by thy word, and encouraged by thy grace, I come; and great as my transgressions are, I humbly beseech thee, freely to pardon them: because I know, that though *my sins have reached unto Heaven*†, and are *lifted up even unto the skies*‡, *Thy mercy, O Lord, is above the Heavens*§. Extend that mercy to me, O heavenly Father; and display, in this illustrious instance, the riches of thy grace, and the prevalency of thy Son's blood! For surely, if such crimson sins as mine, may be made *white as snow, and as wool*‖, and if such a revolter as I am be brought to eternal glory, earth must, so far as it is known, be filled with wonder, and Heaven with praise; and the greatest sinner may cheerfully apply for pardon, if I, the chief of sinners, find it. And Oh that, when I have lain mourning, and as it were bleeding at thy feet, as long as thou thinkest proper, thou wouldst at length *heal this soul of mine*¶ which has sinned against thee; and *give me beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness***! Oh that thou wouldst at length *restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and make me to hear songs of gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice*††! Then, when a sense of thy forgiving love is shed abroad upon my heart, and it is cheered with the voice of pardon, I will proclaim thy grace to others; *I will teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee*‡‡: those that have been backsliding from thee, shall be encouraged to seek thee by my happy experience, which I will gladly proclaim for thy glory, though it be to my own shame and confusion of face. And may this *joy of the Lord be my strength*§§! so that in it I may serve thee hence-forward with a vigour and zeal far beyond what I have hitherto known!

"This I would ask with all humble submission to thy will; for I presume not to insist upon it. If thou shouldst see fit to make me a warning to others, by appointing that I should walk all my days in darkness, and at last die under a cloud, Thy will be done; But, O God, extend mercy for thy Son's sake, to this sinful soul at last; and give me some place, though it were at the feet of all thine other servants, in the regions of glory! Oh bring me at length, though it should be through the gloomiest

* Jer iii. 22. † Rev. xviii. 5. ‡ Jer. li. 9. § Psal. cviii. 4.
‖ Isa. i. 18. ¶ Psal xli. 4. ** Isa. lxi. 3. †† Psal. li. 8, 12.
‡‡ Psal. li 13. §§ Neh. viii. 10.

valley that any have ever passed, into that blessed world, where I shall depart from God no more, where I shall wound my own conscience, and dishonour thy holy name no more! Then shall my tongue be loosed, how long soever it might here be bound under the confusion of guilt; and immortal praises shall be paid to that victorious blood, which has redeemed such an infamous slave of sin, as I must acknowledge myself to be, and brought me, from returns into bondage and repeated pollution, to share the dignity and holiness of those, who are *kings and priests unto God**. Amen."

CHAP. XXIV.

The Case of the Christian under the Hidings of God's Face.

The Phrase scriptural, §. 1. It signifies the withdrawing the Tokens of the divine Favour, §. 2. chiefly as to spiritual Considerations, §. 3. This may become the Case of any Christian, §. 4. and will be found a very sorrowful one, §. 5. The following Directions, therefore, are given to those who suppose it to be their own: I. To enquire whether it be indeed a Case of spiritual Distress, or whether a disconsolate Frame may not proceed from Indisposition of Body, §. 6. or Difficulties, as to worldly Circumstances, §. 7. If it be found to be indeed such, as the Title of the Chapter proposes, be advised. II. To consider it as a merciful Dispensation of God, to awaken and bestir the Soul; and excite to a strict Examination of Conscience, and Reformation of what has been amiss, §. 8, 9. III. To be humble and patient while the Trial continues, §. 10. IV. To go on steadily in the Way of Duty, §. 11. V. To renew a believing Application to the Blood of Jesus, §. 12. An humble Supplication for one under these mournful Exercises of Mind, when they are found to proceed from the spiritual cause supposed.

§. 1. THERE is a case which often occurs in the christian life, which they who accustom themselves much to the exercise of devotion, have been used to call the hiding of God's face. It is a phrase borrowed from the word of God, which I hope may shelter it from contempt at the first hearing. It will be my business in this chapter to state it as plainly as I can, and then to give some advice as to your own conduct when you fall into it, as it is very probable you may before you have finished your journey through this wilderness.

§. 2. The meaning of it may partly be understood by the opposite phrase of God's causing his face to shine upon a per-

* Rev. i. 6.

son, or lifting up upon him the light of his countenance. This seems to carry in it an allusion to the pleasant and delightful appearance which the face of a friend has, and especially if in a superior relation of life, when he converses with those whom he loves and delights in. Thus Job, when speaking of the regard paid him by his attendants, says, *If I smiled upon them, they believed it not, and the light of my countenance they cast not down**; that is, they were careful, in such an agreeable circumstance, to do nothing to displease me, or (as we speak) to cloud my brow. And David, when expressing his desire of the manifestation of God's favour to him, says, *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me;* and, as the effect of it, declares *thou hast put gladness into my heart more than if corn and wine increased*†. Nor is it impossible, that in this phrase, as used by David, there may be some allusion to the bright shining forth of the Shekinah, that is the lustre which dwelt in the cloud as the visible sign of the divine presence with Israel, which God was pleased peculiarly to manifest upon some public occasions, as a token of his favour and acceptance.—On the other hand, therefore, for God to hide his face, must imply the withholding the tokens of his favour, and must be esteemed a mark of his displeasure. Thus Isaiah uses it; *Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear*‡. And again, *Thou hast hid thy face from us,* as not regarding the calamities we suffer, *and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities*§. So likewise, for God *to hide his face from our sins* ‖, signifies to overlook them, and to take no farther notice of them. The same idea is, at other times, expressed by God's *hiding his eyes*¶ from persons of a character disagreeable to him, when they come to address him with their petitions, not vouchsafing (as it were) to look towards them. This is plainly the scriptural sense of the word; and agreeable to this, it is generally used by christians in our day, and every thing which seems a token of divine displeasure towards them is expressed by it.

§. 3. It is farther to be observed here, that the things which they judge to be manifestations of divine favour towards them, or complacency in them, are not only, nor chiefly of a temporal nature, or such as merely relate to the blessings of this animal and perishing life. David, though the promises of the law had a continual reference to such, yet was taught to look farther, and describes them as preferable to, and therefore

* Job xxix. 24. † Psal. iv. 6, 7. ‡ Isai. lix. 2.
§ Isai. lxiv. 7. ‖ Psal. li. 9. ¶ Isai. i. 15.

plainly distinct from, *the blessings of the corn-floor or the wine-press**. And if you, to whom I am now addressing, do not know them to be so, it is plain you are quite ignorant of the subject we are enquiring into, and indeed are yet to take out the first lessons of true religion. All that David says, of *beholding the beauty of the Lord* †, or being *satisfied as with marrow and fatness, when he remembered him on his bed* ‡, as well as *with the goodness of his house, even of his holy temple* §, is to be taken in the same sense, and can need very little explication to the truly experienced soul. But those that have known the light of God's countenance, and the shinings of his face, will, in proportion to the degree of that knowledge, be able to form some notion of the hiding of his face, or the withdrawing of the tokens he has given his people of his presence and favour, which sometimes greatly imbitters prosperity: as where the contrary is found, it sweetens afflictions, and often swallows up the sense of them.

§. 4. And give me leave to remind you my christian friend, (for under that character I now address my reader,) that to be thus deprived of the sense of God's love, and of the tokens of his favour, may soon be the case with you, though you may now have the pleasure to see the candle of the Lord shining upon you, or though it may even seem to be sun-shine and high noon in your soul. You may lose your lively views of the divine perfections and glories, in the contemplation of which you now find that inward satisfaction. You may think of the divine wisdom and power, of the divine mercy and fidelity, as well as of his righteousness and holiness, and feel little inward complacency of soul in the views. It may be, with respect to any lively impressions, as if it were the contemplation merely of a common object. It may seem to you, as if you had lost all idea of those important words, though the view has sometimes swallowed up your whole soul in transports of astonishment, admiration, and love. You may lose your delightful sense of the divine favour. It may be matter of great and sad doubt with you, whether you do indeed belong to God; and all the work of his blessed Spirit may be so veiled and shaded in the soul, that the peculiar characters, by which the hand of that sacred agent might be distinguished, shall be in a great measure lost; and you may be ready to imagine you have only deluded yourself in all the former hopes you have entertained. In consequence of this, those ordinances, in which you now rejoice, may grow very uncom-

* Psal. iv. 7. † Psal. xxvii. 4. ‡ Psal. lxiii. 5, 6. § Psal. lxv. 4.

fortable to you, even when you do indeed desire communion with God in them. You may hear the most delightful evangelical truths opened, you may hear the privileges of God's children most affectionately represented, and not be aware that you have any part or lot in the matter; and from that very coldness and insensibility may be drawing a farther argument, that you have nothing to do with them. And then *your heart may meditate terror**, and under the distress that overwhelms you, your dearest enjoyments may be reflected upon as adding to the weight of it, and making it more sensible, while you consider that you had once such a taste for these things, and have now lost it all. So that perhaps it may seem to you, that they who never felt any thing at all of religious impressions, are happier than you, or at least less miserable. You may perhaps in these melancholy hours, even doubt, whether you have ever prayed at all, and whether all that you called your enjoyment of God, were not some false delight, excited by the great enemy of souls, to make you apprehend that your state was good, that so you might continue his more secure prey.

§. 5. Such as this may be your case for a considerable time; and ordinances may be attended in vain, and the presence of God may be in vain sought in them. You may pour out your soul in private, and then come to public worship, and find little satisfaction in either; but be forced to take up the Psalmist's complaint; *My God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent*† ; or that of Job, *Behold I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him*‡. So that all, which looked like religion, in your mind, shall seem as it were, to be melted into grief, or chilled into fear, or crushed into a deep sense of your own unworthiness; in consequence of which, you shall not dare so much as to lift up your eyes before God, and be almost ashamed to take your place in a worshipping assembly among any that you think his servants. I have known this to be the case of some excellent christians, whose improvements in religion have been distinguished, and whom God hath honoured above many of their brethren in what he hath done for them, and by them. Give me leave therefore, having thus described it, to offer you some plain advices with regard to it; and let not that be imputed to enthusiastic fancy, which proceeds from an intimate and frequent

* Isai. xxxiii. 18. † Psal. xxii. 2. ‡ Job xxiii. 8, 9.

view of facts on the one hand, and from a sincere affectionate desire, on the other, to relieve the tender pious heart in so desolate a state. At least I am persuaded, the attempt will not be overlooked or disapproved by *the great shepherd of the sheep**, who has charged us to *comfort the feeble-minded*†.

§. 6. And here I would first advise you most carefully to enquire, Whether your present distress does indeed arise from causes which are truly spiritual? Or whether it may not rather have its foundation in some disorder of body, or in the circumstances of life in which you are providentially placed, which may break your spirits and deject your mind? The influence of the inferior part of our nature, on the nobler, the immortal spirit, while we continue in this embodied state, is so evident, that no attentive person can, in the general, fail to have observed it; and yet, these are cases in which it seems not to be sufficiently considered; and perhaps your own may be one of them. The state of the blood is often such, as necessarily to suggest gloomy ideas even in dreams, and to indispose the soul for taking pleasure in any thing: and when it is so, why should it be imagined to proceed from any peculiar divine displeasure, if it does not find its usual delight in religion? Or why should God be thought to have departed from us, because he suffers natural causes to produce natural effects, without opposing by miracle to break the connection? When this is the case, the help of the physician is to be sought, rather than that of the divine, or at least, by all means, together with it; and medicine, diet, exercise and air, may, in a few weeks, effect that, which the strongest reasonings, the most pathetic exhortation or consolations, might for many months have attempted in vain.

§. 7. In other instances, the dejection and feebleness of the mind may arise from something uncomfortable in our worldly circumstances; these may cloud as well as distract the thoughts, and imbitter the temper, and thus render us in a great degree unfit for religious services or pleasures; and when it is so, the remedy is to be sought, in submission to divine providence, in abstracting our affections as far as possible from the present world, in a prudent care to ease ourselves of the burden so far as we can, by moderating unnecessary expences, and by diligent application to business, in humble dependance on the divine blessing; in the mean time, endeavouring by faith to look up to him, who sometimes suffers his children to be brought into

* Heb. xiii. 20. † 1 Thess. v. 14.

such difficulties, that he may endear himself more sensibly to them by the method he shall take for their relief.

§. 8. On the principles here laid down, it may perhaps appear, on enquiry, that the distress complained of, may have a foundation very different from what was at first supposed. But where the health is sound, and the circumstances easy; when the animal spirits are disposed for gaiety and entertainment, while all taste for religious pleasure is in a manner gone; when the soul is seized with a kind of lethargic insensibility, or what I had almost called, a paralytic weakness, with respect to every religious exercise, even though there should not be that deep terrifying distress, or pungent amazement, which I before represented as the effect of melancholy; nor that anxiety about the accommodations of life, which straight circumstances naturally produce: I would in that case vary my advice, and urge you, with all possible attention and impartiality, to search into the cause which has brought upon you that great evil under which you justly mourn. And, probably, in the general, the cause is sin: some secret sin which has not been discovered or observed by the eye of the world; for enormities that draw on them the observation and censure of others, will probably fall under the case mentioned in the former chapter, as they must be instances of known and deliberate guilt. Now the eye of God hath seen these evils which have escaped the notice of your fellow-creatures; and in consequence of this care to conceal them from others, while you could not but know they were open to him, God has seen himself in a peculiar manner affronted, and injured, I had almost said insulted by them: and hence his righteous displeasure. Oh! let that never be forgotten, which is so plainly said, so commonly known, so familiar to almost every religious ear, yet too little felt by any of our hearts, *Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear**. And this is, on the whole, a merciful dispensation of God, though it may seem severe; regard it not therefore, merely as your calamity, but as intended to awaken you, that you may not content yourself, even with lying in tears of humiliation before the Lord, but, like Joshua, rise and exert yourself vigorously, to put away from you that accursed thing whatever it be. Let this be your immediate and earnest care, that your pride may be humbled, that your watchfulness may be maintained, that

* Isai. lix. 1, 2

your affections to the world may be deadened, and that on the whole, your fitness for heaven may in every respect be increased. These are the designs of your heavenly Father, and let it be your great concern to co-operate with them.

§. 9. Receive it therefore on the whole, as the most important advice that can be given you, immediately to enter on a strict examination of your conscience. Attend on its gentlest whispers. If a suspicion arises in your mind, that any thing has not been right, trace that suspicion, search into every secret folding of your heart; improve to the purposes of a fuller discovery, the advice of your friends, the reproaches of your enemies; recollect for what your heart hath smitten you at the table of the Lord, for what it would smite you, if you were upon a dying bed, and within this hour to enter on eternity. When you have made any discovery, note it down, and go on in your search, till you can say, these are the remaining corruptions of my heart, these are the sins and follies of my life; this have I neglected; this have I done amiss. And when the account is as complete as you can make it, set yourself in the strength of God to a strenuous reformation, or rather begin the reformation of every thing that seems amiss as soon as ever you discover it; *Return to the Almighty and thou shalt be built up; and put iniquity far from thy tabernacle then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him and he shall hear thee, thou shalt pay thy vows unto him, and his light shall shine upon thy ways**.

§. 10. In the mean time be waiting for God with the deepest humility, and submit yourself to the discipline of your heavenly Father, acknowledging his justice, and hoping in his mercy; even when your conscience is least severe in its remonstrances, and discovers nothing more than the common infirmities of God's people; yet still bow yourself down before him, and own, that so many are the evils of your best days, so many the imperfections of your best services, that by them you have deserved all, and more than all that you suffer; deserved, not only that your sun should be clouded, but that it should go down and arise no more, but leave your soul in a state of everlasting darkness. And while the shade continues, be not impatient. Fret not yourself in any wise, but rather with a holy calmness and gentleness of soul, *wait on the Lord*†. Be willing to stay his time, willing to bear his frown, in humble

* Job xxii. 23, 26, 27. † Psal. xxxvii. 8, 34.

hope that he will at length *return and have compassion on you**. He *has not utterly forgotten to be gracious*, nor *resolved that he will be favourable no more*†. For *the Lord will not cast off for ever; but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies*‡. It is comparatively but for a small moment that he hides his face from you; but you may humbly hope, that *with great mercies he will gather you, and that with everlasting kindness he will have mercy on you*§. The suitable words are not mine, but his; and they wear this, as in the very front of them, "That a soul, under the hidings of God's face, may at last be one whom he will gather, and to whom he will extend everlasting favour."

§. 11. But while the darkness continues, "go on in the way of your duty." Continue in the use of means and ordinances: read and meditate: pray, yes, and sing the praises of God too, though it may be with a heavy heart. Follow *the footsteps of his flock*‖; you may perhaps meet the shepherd of souls in doing it. Place yourself at least in his way. It is possible you may by this means get a kind look from him; and one look, one turn of thought which may happen in a moment, may as it were create a heaven in your soul at once. Go to the table of the Lord. If you cannot rejoice, go and mourn there. Go and mourn that Saviour, whom by your sins *you have pierced*¶; go and lament the breaches of that covenant, which you have there so often confirmed. Christ may perhaps *make himself known unto you in the breaking the bread***, and you may find, to your surprise, that he hath been near you, when you imagined he was at the greatest distance from you; near you, when you thought you were cast out from his presence. Seek your comforts in such employments as these; and not in the vain amusements of the world, and in the pleasures of sense. I shall never forget that affectionate expression, which I am well assured broke out from an eminently pious heart, then almost ready to break under its sorrows of this kind! "Lord, if I may not enjoy thee, let me enjoy nothing else, but go down mourning after thee to the grave!" I wondered not to hear, that almost as soon as this sentiment had been breathed out before God in prayer, the burden was taken off, and the joy of God's salvation restored.

§. 12. I shall add but one advice more; and that is, "That

* Jer. xii. 15. † Psal. lxxvii. 7, 9. ‡ Lam. iii. 31, 32. § Isai. liv. 7, 8.
‖ Cant. i. 8. ¶ Zech. xii. 10. ** Luke xxiv. 35.

you renew your application to the blood of Jesus, through whom the reconciliation between God and your soul has been accomplished." It is *he* that is *our peace*, and *by his blood* it is that *we are made nigh**: it is in him as the beloved of his soul, that God declares, *he is well pleased*†; and it is in him, that *we are made accepted to the glory of his grace*‡. Go therefore, O christian, and apply by faith to a crucified Saviour: Go and apply to him as to a merciful high-priest, and *pour out thy complaint before him, and shew before him thy trouble*§. Lay open the distress and anguish of thy soul to him, who once knew what it was to say, (O astonishing! that he of all others should ever have said it,) *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*‖? Look up for pity and relief to him, who himself suffered, being not only tempted, but with regard to sensible manifestations deserted; that he might thus know how to pity those that are in such a melancholy case, and be ready, as *well as able, to succour them*¶. He is *Immanuel God with us***; and it is only in and through him, that his Father shines forth upon us with the mildest beams of mercy and love. Let it be therefore your immediate care, to renew your acquaintance with him. Review the records of his life and death: hear his words: behold his actions: and when you do so, surely you will find a sacred sweetness diffusing itself over your soul. You will be brought into a calm, gentle, silent frame, in which faith and love will operate powerfully, and God may probably cause the *still small voice* of his *comforting Spirit* to be heard††, till your soul bursts out into a song of praise, and you may be made glad according to the days *in which you have been afflicted*‡‡. In the mean time, such language as the following supplication speaks, may be suitable.

An humble Supplication for one under the Hidings of God's Face.

"BLESSED God! *with thee is the fountain of life*§§, and of happiness. I adore thy name that I have ever tasted of thy streams; that I have ever felt the peculiar pleasure arising from the light of thy countenance, and the shedding abroad of thy love on my soul. But alas, these delightful seasons are now to me no more; and the *remembrance of them engages*

* Eph. ii. 13, 14. † Mat. iii. 17. ‡ Eph i. 6. § Psal. cxlii. 2.
‖ Mat. xxvii. 46. ¶ Heb. ii. 18. ** Mat. i. 23. †† 1 Kings xix. 12.
‡‡ Psal. xc. 15. §§ Psal. xxxvi. 9.

*me to pour out my soul within me**. I would come, as I have formerly done, and call thee with the same endearment, my Father, and my God: but alas, I know not how to do it. Guilt and fear arise, and forbid the delightful language. I seek thee, O Lord, but I seek thee in vain. I would pray, and my lips are sealed up. I would read thy word, and all the promises of it are veiled from mine eyes. I frequent those ordinances, which have been formerly most nourishing and comfortable to my soul; but alas, they are only the shadows of ordinances: the substance is gone: the animating spirit is fled, and leaves them now at best but the image of what I once knew them.

"But, Lord, hast *thou cast off for ever, and wilt thou be favourable no more*†? Hast thou in awful judgment determined, that my soul must be left to a perpetual winter, the sad emblem of eternal darkness? Indeed I deserve it should be so. I acknowledge, O Lord, I deserve to be cast away from thy presence with disdain; to be sunk lower than I am, much lower: I deserve to have *the shadow of death upon mine eye-lids*‡, and even to be surrounded with the thick gloom of the infernal prison. But hast thou not raised multitudes who have deserved like me to be *delivered into chains of darkness*§, to the visions of thy glory above, where no cloud can ever interpose between thee and their rejoicing spirits? *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, have mercy upon me*‖! And though mine iniquities have now justly *caused thee to hide thy face from me*¶, yet be thou rather pleased, agreeably to the gracious language of thy word, to *hide thy face from my sins, and to blot out all mine iniquities***! Cheer my heart with the tokens of thy returning favour, and *say unto my soul, I am thy salvation*††!

"Remember, O Lord God, remember that dreadful day, in which Jesus thy dear Son endured what my sins have deserved! Remember that agony, in which he poured out his soul before thee, and said, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*‡‡! Did he not, O Lord, endure all this, that humble penitents might through him be brought near unto thee, and might behold thee with pleasure, as their Father, and their God? Thus do I desire to come unto thee. Blessed Saviour, art thou not appointed *to give unto them that mourn in Zion, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness*§§? O wash away my tears, anoint my

* Psal. xlii. 4. † Psal. lxxvii. 7. ‡ Job xvi. 16. § 2 Pet. ii. 4.
‖ Psal. cxxiii. 3. ¶ Isai. lix. 2. ** Psal. li. 9. †† Psal. xxxv. 3.
‡‡ Matt. xxvii. 46. §§ Isai. lxi. 3.

head with *the oil of gladness, and clothe me with the garments of salvation**?

"*Oh that I knew where I might find thee*†! Oh that I knew what it is, that has engaged thee to depart from me! I am *searching and trying my ways*‡! Oh that thou wouldst *search me, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts; and if there be any wicked way in me, discover it, and lead me in the way everlasting* §; in that way, in which I may *find rest and peace for my soul*‖, and feel the discoveries of thy love in Christ!

"O God, *who didst command the light to shine out of darkness*¶, speak but the word, and light shall dart into my soul at once! *Open thou my lips and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise***, shall burst out into a cheerful song, which shall display before those, whom my present dejections may have discouraged, the pleasures and supports of religion!

"Yet, Lord, on the whole, I submit to thy will. If it is thus that my faith must be exercised, by walking in darkness for days, and months, and years to come, how long soever they may seem, how long soever they may be, I will submit. Still will I adore thee, as the God of Israel, and the Saviour, though *thou art a God that hidest thyself*††: still will I *trust in the name of the Lord, and stay myself upon my God*‡‡; *trusting in thee though thou slay me*§§; and *waiting for thee, more than they that watch for the morning, yea, more than they that watch for the morning*‖‖. Peradventure *in the evening time it may be light*¶¶. I know, that thou hast sometimes manifested thy compassions to thy dying servants, and given them, in the lowest ebb of their natural spirits, a full tide of divine glory, thus turning *darkness into light before them****. So may it please thee to gild the valley of the shadow of death with the light of thy presence, when I am passing through it, and to stretch forth *thy rod and thy staff to comfort me*†††, that my tremblings may cease, and the gloom may echo with songs of praise; But if it be thy sovereign pleasure, that distress and darkness should still continue to the last motion of my pulse, and the last gasp of my breath, Oh let it cease with the parting struggle, and bring me to that *light* which *is sown for the righteous*, and to that *gladness* which is reserved *for the upright in heart*‡‡‡; to the unclouded regions of everlasting splendor

* Isai. lxi. 10. † Job xxiii. 3. ‡ Lam. iii. 40. § Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.
‖ Jer. vi. 16. ¶ 2 Cor. iv. 6. ** Psal. li. 15. †† Isai. xlv. 15.
‡‡ Isai. l. 10. §§ Job xiii. 15. ‖‖ Psal. cxxx. 6. ¶¶ Zech. xiv. 7.
*** Isai. xiii. 16. ††† Psal. xxiii. 4. ‡‡‡ Psal. xcvii. 11.

and joy, where the full anointings of thy Spirit shall be poured out on all thy people, and thou wilt no more *hide thy face from any of them* !*

" This, Lord, is *thy salvation for which I am waiting*† ; and whilst I feel the desires of my soul drawn out after it, I will never despair of obtaining it. Continue and increase those desires, and at length satisfy and exceed them all, through the riches of thy grace in Christ Jesus! Amen."

CHAP. XXV.

The Christian struggling under great and heavy Afflictions.

Here it is advised, (1.) That Afflictions should be expected, §. 1. (2.) That the righteous Hand of God should be acknowledged in them, when they come, §. 2. (3.) That they should be borne with Patience, §. 3. (4.) That the Divine Conduct in them should be cordially approved, §. 4. (5.) That Thankfulness should be maintained in the midst of Trials, §. 5. (6.) That the Design of Afflictions should be diligently enquired into, and all proper Assistance taken in discovering it, §. 6. (7.) That when it is discovered, it should humbly be complied with and answered, §. 7. A Prayer suited to such a Case.

§. 1. SINCE *man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward*‡ ; and Adam has entailed on all his race the sad inheritance of calamity in their way to death, it will certainly be prudent and necessary, that we should all expect to meet with trials and afflictions ; and that you, reader, whoever you are, should be endeavouring to gird on your armour, and put yourself into a posture to encounter those trials, which will fall to your lot, as a man, and a christian. Prepare yourself to receive afflictions and to endure them, in a manner agreeable to both those characters. In this view, when you see others under the burden, consider how possible it is, that you may be called out to the very same difficulties, or to others equal to them. Put your soul, as in the place of theirs. Think, how you could endure the load, under which they lie ; and endeavour at once to comfort them, and to strengthen your own heart ; or rather pray that God would do it. And observing how liable mortal life is to such sorrows, moderate your expectations from it ; raise your thoughts above it ; and form your schemes of happiness, only for that world, where they cannot be disappointed : in the mean time, blessing God, that your prosperity

* Ezek. xxxix. 29. † Gen. xlix. 18. ‡ Job v. 7.

is lengthened out thus far, and ascribing it to his special providence, that you continue so long unwounded, when so many showers of arrows are flying around you, and so many are falling by them, on the right-hand and on the left.

§. 2. When at length your turn comes, as it certainly will, from the first hour in which an affliction seizes you, realize to yourself the hand of God in it, and lose not the view of him in any second cause, which may have proved the immediate occasion. Let it be your first care, to *humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time**. Own that *he is just in all that is brought upon you*†, and that in all these things, *he punishes you less than your iniquities deserve*‡. Compose yourself to bear his hand with patience, to glorify his name by a submission to his will, and to fall in with the gracious design of this visitation, as well as to wait the issue of it quietly, whatsoever the event may be.

§. 3. Now that *patience may have its perfect work*§, reflect frequently, and deeply, upon your own meanness and sinfulness. Consider how often every mercy has been forfeited, and every judgment deserved. And consider too, how long the patience of God hath borne with you, and how wonderfully it is still exerted towards you; and indeed not only his patience, but his bounty too. Afflicted as you are, (for I speak to you now as actually under the pressure) look round and survey your remaining mercies, and be gratefully sensible o f them. Make the supposition of their being removed: what if God should stretch out his hand against you, and add poverty to pain, or pain to poverty, or the loss of friends to both; or the death of surviving friends to that of those whom you are now mourning over; would not the wound be more grievous? Adore his goodness, that this is not the case; and take heed, lest your unthankfulness should provoke him to multiply your sorrows. Consider also the need you have of discipline; how wholesome it may prove to your souls, and what merciful designs our heavenly Father has, in all the corrections he sends upon his children.

§. 4. Nay, I will add, that in consequence of all these considerations it may well be expected, not only that you should submit to your afflictions as what you cannot avoid, but that you should sweetly acquiesce in them, and approve them; that you should not only justify but glorify God in sending them; that you should glorify him with your heart, and with

* 1 Pet. v. 6. † Neh. ix. 33. ‡ Ezra ix. 13. § James i. 4.

your lips too. Think not praise unsuitable on such an occasion; nor think that praise alone to be suitable, which takes its rise from remaining comforts; but know that it is your duty not only to be thankful in your afflictions, but to be thankful on account of them.

§. 5. God himself has said, *in every thing give thanks**; and he has taught his servants to say, *Yea, also we glory in tribulation*†. And most certain it is, that to true believers they are instances of divine mercy; for *whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*‡, with peculiar and distinguished endearment. View your present afflictions in this light, as chastisements of love; and then let your own heart say, whether love does not demand praise. Think with yourself, "It is thus that God is making me conformable to his own Son; it is thus that he is training me up for complete glory. Thus he kills my corruptions; thus he strengthens my graces; thus he is wisely contriving to bring me nearer to himself, and to ripen me for the honours of his heavenly kingdom. It is, if need be, that *I am in heaviness*§; and he surely knows what that need is, better than I can pretend to teach him; and knows what peculiar propriety there is in this affliction, to answer my present necessity, and do me that peculiar good which he is graciously intending me by it. This *tribulation shall work patience, and patience experience, and experience a more assured hope; even a hope which shall not make ashamed, while the love of God is shed abroad in my heart*‖, and shines through my affliction, like the sun through a gentle descending cloud, darting in light upon the shade, and mingling fruitfulness with weeping."

§. 6. Let it be then your earnest care, while you thus look on your affliction, whatever it may be, as coming from the hand of God, to improve it to the purposes for which it was sent. And that you may so improve it, let it be your first concern to know what those purposes are. Summon up all the attention of your soul, to *hear the rod, and him who hath appointed it*¶; and pray earnestly that you may understand its voice. Examine your life, your words, and your heart; and pray, that God would so guide your enquiries, that you may *return unto the Lord that smiteth you***. To assist you in this, call in the help of pious friends, and particularly of your ministers: intreat, not only their prayers, but their advices too, as to the probable de-

* 1 Thes. v. 18. † Rom. v. 3. ‡ Heb. xii. 6. § 1 Pet. i. 6.
‖ Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. ¶ Mic. vi. 9. ** Isai. ix. 13.

sign of providence: and encourage them freely to tell you any thing which occurs to their minds upon this head. And if such an occasion should lead them to touch upon some of the imperfections of your character and conduct, look upon it as a great token of their friendship, and take it not only patiently, but thankfully. It does but ill become a christian, at any time to resent reproofs and admonitions; and least of all does it become him, when the rebukes of his heavenly Father are upon him. He ought rather to seek admonitions, at such a time as this, and voluntarily offer his wounds to be searched by a faithful and skilful hand.

§. 7. And when by one means or another you have got a ray of light to direct you in the meaning and language of such dispensations, take heed that you do not, in any degree, *harden yourself against God, and walk contrary to him**. Obstinate reluctance to the apprehended design of any providential stroke is inexpressibly provoking to him. Set yourself therefore to an immediate reformation of whatever you discover amiss; and labour to learn the general lessons of greater submission to God's will, of a more calm indifference to the world, and of a closer attachment to divine converse, and to the views of an approaching invisible state. And whatever particular proportion or correspondence you may observe, between this or that circumstance in your affliction, and your former transgressions, be especially careful to act according to that more peculiar and express voice of the rod. Then you may perhaps have speedy and remarkable reason to say, that *it hath been good for you that you have been afflicted*†; and with a multitude of others, may learn to number the times of your sharpest trials, among the sweetest and the most exalted moments of your life. For this purpose, let prayer be your frequent employment; and let such sentiments as these, if not in the very same terms, be often and affectionately poured out before God.

An humble Address to God, under the Pressures of heavy Affliction.

" O THOU supreme, yet all-righteous and gracious governor of the whole universe! Mean and inconsiderable as this little province of thy spacious empire may appear, thou dost not disregard the earth and its inhabitants; but attendest to its concerns with the most condescending and gracious regards.

* Lev. xxvi. 27. † Psal. cxix. 71.

Thou reignest, and I rejoice in it, as it is indeed matter of universal joy*. I believe thy universal providence and care; and I firmly believe thy wise, holy, and kind interposition in every thing which relates to me, and to the circumstances of my abode in this world. I would look through all inferior causes unto thee, whose eyes are upon all thy creatures; to thee, *who formest light, and createst darkness, who makest peace, and createst evil*†; to thee, Lord, who at thy pleasure canst exchange the one for the other, canst turn the brightest noon into midnight, and the darkest midnight into noon.

"O thou wise and merciful governor of the world! I have often said, Thy will be done: and now, thy will is painful to me. But shall I upon that account unsay what I have so often said? God forbid! I come rather to lay myself down at thy feet, and to declare my full and free submission to all thy sacred pleasure. O Lord, thou art just and righteous in all! I acknowledge, in thy venerable and awful presence, that *I have deserved this, and ten thousand times more*‡; I acknowledge, that *it is of thy mercy that I am not utterly consumed*§, and that any the least degree of comfort yet remains. O Lord, I most readily confess that the sins of one day of my life have merited all these chastisements; and that every day of my life hath been more or less sinful. Smite, therefore, O thou righteous judge! and I will still adore thee, that instead of the scourge, thou hast not given a commission to the sword, to do all the dreadful work of justice, and to pour out my blood in thy presence.

"But shall I speak unto thee only as my judge? O Lord, thou hast taught me a tender name; thou condescendest to call thyself my father, and to speak of correction as the effects of thy love. O welcome, welcome, those afflictions, which are the tokens of thy parental affection, the marks of my adoption into thy family! Thou knowest what discipline I need. Thou seest, O Lord, that bundle of folly, which there is in the heart of thy poor froward and thoughtless child; and knowest what rods, and what strokes, are needful to drive it away. I would therefore *be in humble subjection to the Father of spirits, who chasteneth me for my profit; would be in subjection to him, and live*‖. I would bear thy strokes, not merely because I cannot resist them, but because I love and trust in thee. I would sweetly acquiesce and rest in thy will, as well as stoop to it; and would say, *Good is the word of the Lord*¶: and I desire that not only my lips, but

* Psal. xcvii. 1. † Isai. xlv. 7. ‡ Ezra ix. 13.
§ Lam. iii. 22. ‖ Heb. xii. 9, 10. ¶ 2 Kings xx. 19.

my soul may acquiesce. Yea, Lord, I would praise thee, that thou wilt shew so much regard to me, as to apply such remedies as these to the diseases of my mind, and art thus kindly careful to train me up for glory. I have no objection against being afflicted, against being afflicted in this particular way. *The cup which my Father puts into mine hand, shall I not drink it* ?* By thine assistance and support I will. Only be pleased, O Lord, to stand by me, and sometimes to grant me a favourable look in the midst of my sufferings! Support my soul, I beseech thee, by thy consolations mingled with my tribulations; and I shall glory in those tribulations, that are thus allayed! It has been the experience of many, who have reflected on afflicted days with pleasure, and have acknowledged that their comforts have swallowed up their sorrows. And after all that thou hast done, *are thy mercies restrained† ? Is thy hand waxed short‡ ?* or canst thou not still do the same for me?

" If my heart be less tender, less sensible, thou canst cure that disorder, and canst make this affliction the means of curing it. Thus let it be; and at length in thine own due time, and in the way which thou shalt chuse, work out deliverance for me; *and shew me thy marvellous loving-kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them that put their trust in thee§!* For I well know, that how dark soever this night of affliction seem, if thou sayest, Let there be light, there shall be light. But I would urge nothing, before the time thy wisdom and goodness shall appoint. I am much more concerned that my afflictions may be sanctified, than that they may be removed. Number me, O God, among the *happy persons, whom whilst thou chastenest, thou teachest out of thy law‖! Shew me*, I beseech thee, *wherefore thou contendest with me¶*; and purify me by the fire which is so painful to me, while I am passing through it! Dost thou not chasten thy children for this very end, *that they may be partakers of thy holiness**!* Thou knowest, O God, it is this my soul is breathing after. I am partaker of thy bounty, every day and moment of my life: I am partaker of thy gospel, and I hope in some measure too, a partaker of the grace of it operating on my heart: Oh may it operate more and more, that I may largely partake of thine holiness too; that I may come nearer and nearer in the temper of my mind to thee, O blessed God, the supreme model of perfection! Let my soul be (as it were) melted, though with the intensest heat of the furnace, if I may but

* John xviii. 11. † Isai. lxiii. 15. ‡ Numb. xi. 23. § Psal. xvii. 7.
‖ Psal. xciv. 12. ¶ Job x. 2. ** Heb. xii. 10.

thereby be made fit for being delivered into the mould of thy gospel, and bearing thy bright and amiable image!

"O Lord, my soul longeth for thee; it *crieth out for the living God*!* In thy presence, and under the support of thy love, I can bear any thing; and am willing to bear it, if I may grow more lovely in thine eyes, and more meet for thy kingdom. The days of my affliction will have an end; the hour will at length come, *when thou wilt wipe away all my tears†. Though it tarry, I would wait for it‡.* My foolish heart, in the midst of all its trials, is ready to grow fond of this earth, disappointing and grievous as it is: and graciously, O God, dost thou deal with me, in breaking these bonds that would tie me faster to it. O let my soul be girding itself up, and (as it were) stretching its wings in expectation of that blessed hour, when it shall drop all its sorrows and incumbrances at once, and soar away to expatiate with infinite delight in the regions of liberty, peace, and joy! Amen."

CHAP. XXVI.

The Christian assisted in examining into his Growth in Grace.

The Examination important, §. 1. False Marks of Growth to be avoided, §. 2. True Marks proposed; such as, (1.) Increasing Love to God, §. 3. (2.) Benevolence to Men, §. 4. (3.) Candour of Disposition, §. 5. (4.) Meekness under Injuries, §. 6. (5.) Serenity amidst the Uncertainties of Life, §. 7. (6.) Humility, §. 8. especially as expressed in evangelical Exercises of Mind towards Christ and the Spirit, §. 9. (7.) Zeal for the divine Honour, §. 10. (8.) Habitual and cheerful Willingness to exchange Worlds, whenever God shall appoint it, §. 11. Conclusion, §. 12. The Christian breathing after Growth in Grace.

§. 1. IF by divine grace you have been *born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible*§, even by that *word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*, not only in the world and the church, but in particular souls in which it is sown; you will, *as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby*‖. And though in the most advanced state of religion on earth, we are but infants, in comparison of what we hope to be, when in the heavenly world, we arrive *unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*¶, yet as we have some exercise of a sanctified reason, we shall be soli-

* Psal. lxxxiv. 2. † Rev. xxi. 4. ‡ Hab. ii. 3.
§ 1 Pet. i. 23. ‖ 1 Pet. ii. 2. ¶ Eph. iv. 13.

citous that we may be growing and thriving infants. And you, my reader, *if so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious**, will, I doubt not, feel this solicitude. I would therefore endeavour to assist you in making the enquiry, whether religion be on the advance in your soul. And here, I shall warn you against some false marks of growth; and then, shall endeavour to lay down others on which you may depend as more solid.—In this view I would observe, that you are not to measure your growth in grace, only or chiefly by your advances in knowledge, or in zeal, or any other passionate impression of the mind; no, nor by the fervour of devotion alone; but by the habitual determination of the will for God, and by your prevailing disposition to obey his commands, to submit to his disposals, and to subserve his schemes in the world.

§. 2. It must be allowed, that knowledge and affection in religion, are indeed desirable. Without some degree of the former, religion cannot be rational; and it is very reasonable to believe, that without some degree of the latter that it cannot be sincere, in creatures whose natures are constituted like ours. Yet there may be a great deal of speculative knowledge, and a great deal of rapturous affection, where there is no true religion at all; and therefore much more, where there is no advanced state in it. The exercise of our rational faculties, upon the evidences of divine revelation, and upon the declaration of it as contained in scripture, may furnish a very wicked man with a well-digested body of orthodox divinity in his head, when not one single doctrine of it has ever reached his heart. An eloquent description of the sufferings of Christ, of the solemnities of judgment, of the joys of the blessed, and the miseries of the damned, might move the breast even of a man who did not firmly believe them; as we often find ourselves strongly moved by well-wrought narrations, or discourses, which at the same time we know to have their foundation in fiction. Natural constitution, or such accidental causes as are some of them too low to be here mentioned, may supply the eyes with a flood of tears, which may discharge itself plenteously upon almost any occasion that shall first arise. And a proud impatience of contradiction, directly opposite as it is to the gentle spirit of christianity, may make a man's blood boil, when he hears the notions he has entertained, and especially those which he has openly and vigorously espoused, disputed and opposed. This may possibly lead him, in terms of strong

* 1 Pet. ii. 3.

indignation, to pour out his zeal and his rage before God, in a fond conceit, that as the God of truth, he is the patron of those favourite doctrines, by whose fair appearances perhaps he himself is misled. And if these speculative refinements, or these affectionate sallies of the mind, be consistent with a total absence of true religion, they are much more apparently consistent with a very low estate of it. I would desire to lead you, my friend, into sublimer notions, and juster marks; and refer you to other practical writers, and above all to the book of God, to prove how material they are. I would therefore intreat you to bring your own heart to answer, as in the presence of God, to such enquiries as these.

§. 3. Do you find "divine love, on the whole, advancing in your soul?"—Do you feel yourself more and more sensible of the presence of God; and does that sense grow more delightful to you, than it formerly was? Can you, even when your natural spirits are weak and low, and you are not in any frame for the ardours and ecstacies of devotion, nevertheless find a pleasing rest, a calm repose of heart, in the thought that God is near you, and that he sees the secret sentiments of your soul; while you are, as it were, labouring up the hill, and casting a longing eye towards him, though you cannot say you enjoy any sensible communications from him? Is it agreeable to you to open your heart to his inspection and regard, to present it to him laid bare of every disguise, and to say with David, *Thou, Lord, knowest thy servant*!* Do you find a growing esteem and approbation of that sacred law of God, which is the transcript of his moral perfections? Do you inwardly *esteem all his precepts concerning all things to be right*†? Do you discern, not only the necessity, but the reasonableness, the beauty, the pleasure of obedience; and feel a growing scorn and contempt of those things, which may be offered as the price of your innocence, and would tempt you to sacrifice or to hazard your interest in the divine favour and friendship? Do you find an ingenuous desire to please God; not only because he is so powerful, and has so many good and so many evil things entirely at his command; but from a veneration of his most amiable nature and character; and do you find your heart habitually reconciled to a most humble subjection, both to his commanding and to his disposing will? Do you perceive, that your own will is now more ready and disposed, in every circumstance, to bear the yoke, and to submit to the

* 2 Sam. vii. 20. † Psal. cxix. 128.

divine determination, whatever he appoints to be borne, or forborne? Can you *in patience possess your soul**? Can you maintain a more steady calmness and serenity, when God is striking at your dearest enjoyments in this world, and acting most directly contrary to your present interests, to your natural passions and desires? If you can, it is a most certain and noble sign, that grace is grown up in you to a very vigorous state.

§. 4. Examine also, "what affections you find in your heart towards those who are round about you, and towards the rest of mankind in general."—Do you find your heart overflow with undissembled and unrestrained benevolence? Are you more sensible than you once were, of those most endearing bonds which unite all men, and especially all christians, into one community; which make them brethren and fellow-citizens? Do all the unfriendly passions die and wither in your soul, while the kind social affections grow and strengthen? And though self-love was never the reigning passion, since you became a true christian; yet as some remainders of it are still too ready to work inwardly, and to shew themselves, especially as sudden occasions arise, do you perceive that you get ground of them? Do you think of yourself only as one of a great number, whose particular interests and concerns are of little importance when compared with those of the community, and ought by all means, on all occasions, to be sacrificed to them?

§. 5. Reflect especially "on the temper of your mind towards those, whom an unsanctified heart might be ready to imagine it had some just excuse for excepting out of the list of those it loves, and towards whom you are ready to feel a secret aversion, or at least an alienation from them."—How does your mind stand affected towards those who differ from you in their religious sentiments and practices? I do not say that christian charity will require you to think every error harmless. It argues no want of love to a friend in some cases, to fear lest his disorder should prove more fatal than he seems to imagine; nay sometimes, the very tenderness of friendship may increase that apprehension. But to hate persons because we think they are mistaken, and to aggravate every difference in judgment or practice into a fatal and damnable error, that destroys all christian communion and love, is a symptom generally much worse than the evil it condemns. Do you love the image of Christ in a person who thinks himself obliged in conscience to profess and worship in a

* Luke xxi. 19.

manner different from yourself? Nay farther, can you love and honour that which is truly amiable and excellent in those, in whom much is defective; in those, in whom there is a mixture of bigotry and narrowness of spirit, which may lead them perhaps to slight, or even to censure you? Can you love them, as the disciples and servants of Christ, who through a mistaken zeal may be ready to *cast out your name as evil**, and to warn others against you as a dangerous person? This is none of the least triumphs of charity, nor any despicable evidence of an advance in religion.

§. 6. And, on this head, reflect farther, "how can you bear injuries?"—There is a certain hardiness of soul in this respect, which argues a confirmed state in piety and virtue. Does every thing of this kind hurry and ruffle you, so as to put you on contrivances, how you may recompense, or at least how you may disgrace and expose him, who has done you the wrong? Or can you stand the shock calmly, and easily divert your mind to other objects, only (when you recollect these things,) pitying and praying for those, who with the worst tempers and views are assaulting you? This is a Christ-like temper indeed, and he will own it as such; will own you as one of his soldiers, as one of his heroes; especially if it rises so far, as instead of being *overcome of evil, to overcome evil with good*†. Watch over your spirit and over your tongue, when injuries are offered; and see whether you be ready to meditate upon them, to aggravate them to yourself, to complain of them to others, and to lay on all the load of blame that you in justice can: or, whether you be ready to put the kindest construction upon the offence, to excuse it as far as reason will allow, and (where, after all, it will wear a black and odious aspect) to forgive it, heartily to forgive it, and that even before any submission is made, or pardon asked; and in token of the sincerity of that forgiveness, to be contriving what can be done, by some benefit or other towards the injurious person, to teach him a better temper.

§. 7. Examine farther, "with regard to the other evils and calamities of life, and even with regard to its uncertainty, how can you bear them?"—Do you find your soul is in this respect gathering strength? Have you fewer foreboding fears and disquieting alarms, than you once had, as to what may happen in life? Can you trust the wisdom and goodness of God, to order your affairs for you, with more complacency and cheerfulness

* Luke vi. 22. † Rom. xii. 21.

than formerly? Do you find you are able to unite your thoughts more in surveying present circumstances, that you may collect immediate duty from them, though you know not what God will next appoint or call you to? And when you feel the smart of affliction, do you make a less matter of it? Can you transfer your heart more easily to heavenly and divine objects, without an anxious solicitude, whether this or that burden be removed, so it may but be sanctified to promote your communion with God and your ripeness for glory.

§. 8. Examine also "whether you advance in humility."—This is a silent, but most excellent grace; and they who are most eminent in it, are dearest to God, and most fit for the communications of his presence to them. Do you then feel your mind more emptied of proud and haughty imaginations; not prone so much to look back upon past services, which it has performed, as forward to those which are yet before you, and inward upon the remaining imperfections of your heart? Do you more tenderly observe your daily slips and miscarriages, and find yourself disposed to mourn over those things before the Lord, that once passed with you as slight matters; though when you come to survey them, as in the presence of God, you find they were not wholly involuntary, or free from guilt? Do you feel in your breast a deeper apprehension of the infinite Majesty of the blessed God, and of the glory of his natural and moral perfections; so as, in consequence of these views, to perceive yourself (as it were) annihilated in his presence, and shrink into *less than nothing and vanity*?* If this be your temper, God will look upon you with peculiar favour, and will visit you more and more with the distinguishing blessings of his grace.

§. 9. But there is another great branch and effect of christian humility, which it would be an unpardonable negligence to omit. Let me therefore farther enquire: Are you more frequently renewing your application, your sincere, steady, determinate application, to the righteousness and blood of Christ, as being sensible how unworthy you are to appear before God, otherwise than in him? And do the remaining corruptions of your heart humble you before him, though the disorders of your life are in a great measure cured? Are you more earnest to obtain the quickening influences of the holy spirit; and have you such a sense of your own weakness, as to engage you to depend, in all the duties you perform, upon the

* Isai. xl. 17.

communications of his grace to *help your infirmities** ? Can you, at the close of your most religious, exemplary, and useful days, blush before God for the deficiencies of them, while others perhaps may be ready to admire and extol your conduct? And while you give the glory of all that has been right to him, from whom the strength and grace has been derived, are you coming to the blood of sprinkling, to free you from the guilt which mingles itself even with the best of your services? Do you learn to receive the bounties of providence, not only with thankfulness as coming from God, but with a mixture of shame and confusion too, under a consciousness that you do not deserve them, and are continually forfeiting them? And do you justify providence in your afflictions and disappointments, even while many are flourishing around you in the full bloom of prosperity, whose offences have been more visible at least, and more notorious than yours?

§. 10. Do you also advance "in zeal and activity for the service of God, and the happiness of mankind?"—Does your love shew itself solid and sincere, by a continual flow of good works from it? Can you view the sorrows of others with tender compassion, and with projects and contrivances what you may do to relieve them? Do you feel in your breast, that you are more frequently *devising liberal things*†," and ready to wave your own advantage or pleasure that you may accomplish them? Do you find your imaginations teeming (as it were) with conceptions and schemes, for the advancement of the cause and interest of Christ in the world, for the propagation of his gospel, and for the happiness of your fellow-creatures? And do you not only pray, but act for it; act in such a manner, as to shew that you pray in earnest, and feel a readiness to do what little you can in this cause, even though others, who might, if they pleased, very conveniently do a vast deal more, will do nothing?

§. 11. And, not to enlarge upon this copious head, reflect once more "how your affections stand, with regard to this world, and another?"—Are you more deeply and practically convinced of the vanity of these *things which are seen, and are temporal*‡ ?—Do you perceive your expectations from them, and your attachments to them, to diminish? You are willing to stay in this world, as long as your Father pleases; and it is right and well: but do you find your bonds so loosened to it, that you are willing, heartily willing, to leave it at the shortest

* Rom. viii. 26. † Isai. xxxii. 8. ‡ 2 Cor. iv. 18.

warning; so that if God should see fit to summon you away on a sudden, though it should be in the midst of your enjoyments, pursuits, expectations, and hopes, you would cordially consent to that remove; without saying, "Lord, let me stay a little while longer, to enjoy this or that agreeable entertainment, to finish this or that scheme?" Can you think with an habitual calmness and hearty approbation, if such be the divine pleasure of waking no more when you lie down on your bed, of returning home no more when you go out of your house? And yet, on the other hand, how great soever the burdens of life are, do you find a willingness to bear them, in submission to the will of your heavenly Father, though it should be to many future years; and though they should be years of far greater affliction than you have ever yet seen? Can you say calmly and steadily, if not with such overflowings of tender affections as you could desire, Behold thy servant, thy child, is *in thine hand, do with me as seemeth good in thy sight** ! My will is melted into thine; to be lifted up or laid down, to be carried out or brought in, to be here or there, in this or that circumstance, just as thou pleasest, and as shall best suit with thy great extensive plan, which it is impossible that I, or all the angels in heaven, should mend."

§. 12. These, if I understand matters aright, are some of the most substantial evidences of growth and establishment in religion. Search after them: bless God for them, so far as you discover them in yourself; and study to advance in them daily, under the influences of divine grace, to which I heartily recommend you, and to which I intreat you frequently to recommend yourself.

The Christian breathing earnestly after Growth in Grace.

"O THOU ever blessed fountain of natural and spiritual life! I thank thee, that I live, and know the exercises and pleasures of a religious life. I bless thee, that thou hast infused into me thine own vital breath, though I was once *dead in trespasses and sins*† ; so that I am become, in a sense peculiar to thine own children, *a living soul*‡. But it is mine earnest desire, that I may not only live, but grow; *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*§, upon an acquaintance with whom my progress in it so evidently depends! In this view I humbly intreat thee, that thou wilt form my mind

* 2 Sam. xv. 26. † Eph. ii. 1. ‡ Gen. ii. 7. § 2 Pet. iii. 18.

to right notions in religion, that I may not judge of grace by any wrong conceptions of it, nor measure my advances in it by those things, which are merely the effects of nature, and probably its corrupt effects!

"May I be seeking after an increase of divine love to thee, my God and Father in Christ, of unreserved resignation to thy wise and holy will, and of extensive benevolence to my fellow-creatures! May I grow in patience and fortitude of soul, in humility and zeal, in spirituality and a heavenly disposition of mind, and in a concern, "that whether present or absent I may be accepted of the Lord*," that whether I live or die it may be for his glory! In a word, as thou knowest I hunger and thirst after righteousness, make me whatever thou wouldst delight to see me! Draw on my soul, by the gentle influences of thy gracious spirit, every trace and every feature, which thine eye, O heavenly Father, may survey with pleasure, and which thou mayest acknowledge as thine own image.

"I am sensible, O Lord, I have not as yet attained: yea, my soul is utterly confounded to think, how far I am from being already perfect: but this one thing (after the great example of thine apostle, and the much greater of his Lord) I would endeavour to do; *forgetting the things which are behind, I would press forward to those which are before*†. O that thou wouldst feed my soul by thy word and spirit! Having been, as I humbly hope and trust, regenerated by it, *being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, even by thy word which liveth and abideth for ever*‡; as a *new-born babe I desire the sincere milk of the word, that I may grow thereby*§. And may my *profiting appear unto all men*‖, till at length *I come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*¶; and after having enjoyed the pleasures of those that flourish eminently in thy courts below, be fixed in the paradise above! I ask and hope it through him, *of whose fulness we have all received, even grace for grace***: *to him be glory, both now and for ever*††!" Amen.

* 2 Cor. v. 9. † Phil. iii. 12, 13. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 23. § 1 Pet. ii. 2.
‖ 1 Tim. iv. 15. ¶ Eph. iv. 13. ** John i. 16. †† 2 Pet. iii. 18.

CHAP. XXVII.

The advanced Christian reminded of the Mercies of God, and exhorted to the Exercises of habitual Love to Him, and Joy in Him.

An holy Joy in God, our Privilege as well as our Duty, §. 1. The Christian invited to the Exercise of it; §. 2. (1.) By the Representation of Temporal Mercies, §. 3. (2.) By the Consideration of Spiritual Favours, §. 4. (3.) By the Views of Eternal Happiness, §. 5. And, (4.) Of the Mercies of God to others, the Living and the Dead, §. 6. The Chapter closes with an Exhortation to this heavenly Exercise, §. 7. and with an Example of the genuine Workings of this grateful Joy in God.

§. 1. I WOULD now suppose my reader to find, on an examination of his spiritual state, that he is growing in grace. And if you desire that this grace may at once be acknowledged and promoted, let me call your soul to that more affectionate exercise of love to God, and joy in him, which suits and strengthens, and exalts the character of the advanced christian; and which I beseech you to regard, not only as your privilege, but as your duty too. Love is the most sublime, generous principle of all true and acceptable obedience; and with love, when so wisely and happily fixed, when so certainly returned, joy, proportionable joy, must naturally be connected. It may justly grieve a man that enters into the spirit of christianity, to see how low a life even the generality of sincere christians commonly live in this respect. *Rejoice then in the Lord, ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness**, and of all those other perfections and glories, which are included in that majestic, that wonderful, that delightful name, The Lord thy God! Spend not your sacred moments merely in confession, or in petition, though each must have their daily share: but give a part, a considerable part, to the celestial and angelic work of praise. Yea, labour to carry about with you continually an heart overflowing with such sentiments, warmed and inflamed with such affections.

§. 2. Are there not continually rays enough diffused from the great Father of light and love, to enkindle it in our bosom? Come, my christian friend and brother, come and survey with me the goodness of our heavenly Father. And Oh that he would give me such a sense of it, that I might represent it in a suitable manner; that *while I am musing the fire may burn in*

* Psal. xcvii. 12.

*my own heart**, and be communicated to yours! And Oh that it might pass with the lines I write, from soul to soul; awakening in the breast of every christian that reads them, sentiments more worthy of the children of God, and the heirs of glory: who are to spend an eternity in those sacred exercises, to which I am now endeavouring to excite you!

§. 3. Have you not reason to adopt the words of David, and say, *How many are thy gracious thoughts unto me, O Lord! How great is the sum of them! When I would count them, they are more in number than the sand*†. You indeed know where to begin the survey; for the favours of God begun with your being. Commemorate it therefore with a grateful heart, that the eye which saw your substance, being yet imperfect, beheld you with a friendly care, when you were made in secret, and have watched over you ever since; and that the hand, which drew the plan of your members, when *as yet there was none of them*‡; not only fashioned them at first, but from that time has been concerned in keeping all your bones, so that *not one of them is broken*§: and that, indeed, it is to this you owe it, that you live. Look back upon the path you have trod, from the day that God brought you out of the womb, and say, whether you do not (as it were) see all the road thick set with the marks and memorials of the divine goodness. Recollect the places where you have lived, and the persons with whom you have most intimately conversed; and call to mind the mercies you have received in those places, and from those persons, as the instruments of the divine care and goodness. Recollect the difficulties and dangers, with which you have been surrounded; and reflect attentively on what God hath done to defend you from them, or to carry you through them. Think, how often there has been but a step between you and death; and how suddenly God hath sometimes interposed to set you in safety, even before you apprehended your danger. Think of those chambers of illness, in which you have been confined, and from whence perhaps you once thought you should go forth no more; but said, with Hezekiah *in the cutting off of your days, I shall go to the gates of the grave, I am deprived of the residue of my years*‖. God has, it may be, since that time, added many years to your life; and you know not how many may be in reserve, or how much usefulness and happiness may attend each. Survey your circumstances in relative life; how many kind friends are surrounding you daily, and studying how they may contribute to

* Psal. xxxix. 3. † Psal. cxxxix. 17, 18. ‡ Psal. cxxxix. 15, 16.
§ Psal. xxxiv. 20. ‖ Isai. xxxviii. 10.

your comfort. Reflect on those remarkable circumstances in Providence, which occasioned the knitting of some bonds of this kind, which next to those which join your soul to God, you number among the happiest. And forget not in how many instances, when these dear lives have been threatened, lives perhaps more sensibly dear than your own, God hath given them back from the borders of the grave, and so added new endearments arising from that tender circumstance, to all your after converse with them. Nor forget, in how gracious a manner he hath supported some others in their last moments, and enabled them to leave behind a sweet odour of piety, which hath embalmed their memories, revived you when ready to faint under the sorrows of the first separation, and, on the whole, made even the recollection of their death delightful.

§. 4. But it is more than time that I lead on your thoughts to the many spiritual mercies which God hath bestowed upon you. Look back, as it were, to *the rock from whence you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence you were digged**. Reflect seriously on the state wherein divine grace found you: under how much guilt, under how much pollution! In what danger, in what ruin! Think what was, and Oh think with yet deeper reflection, what would have been the case! The eye of God, which penetrates into eternity, saw what your mind, amused with the trifles of present time and sensual gratification, was utterly ignorant and regardless of: it saw you on the borders of eternity, and pitied you; saw, that you would in a little time have been such a helpless, wretched creature, as the sinner that is just now dead, and has to his infinite surprise and everlasting terror met his unexpected doom, and would like him stand thunder-struck in astonishment and despair. This God saw, and he pitied you; and being merciful to you, he provided in the counsels of his eternal love and grace a Redeemer for you, and purchased you to himself with the blood of his Son: a price, which if you will pause upon it, and think seriously what it was, must surely affect you to such a degree, as to make you fall down before God in wonder and shame, to think that it should ever have been given for you. To accomplish these blessed purposes, he sent his grace into your heart; so that though *you were once darkness, you are now light in the Lord*†. He made that happy change which you now feel in your soul, and *by his holy Spirit which is given to you, he shed abroad that principle of love*‡, which is enkindled by this review, and now flames with

* Isai. li. 1. † Eph. v. 8. ‡ Rom. v. 5.

greater ardour than before. Thus far he hath supported you in your christian course; and *having obtained help from him it is, that you continue even to this day**. He hath not only *blessed you, but made you a blessing*†: and though you have not been so useful, as that holy generosity of heart which he has excited, would have engaged you to desire; yet some good you have done in the station in which he has fixed you. Some of your brethren of mankind have been relieved, perhaps too some thoughtless creature reclaimed to virtue and happiness by his blessing on your endeavours. Some in the way to heaven, are praising God for you; and some perhaps already there, are longing for your arrival, that they may thank you in nobler and more expressive forms for benefits, the importance of which they now sufficiently understand, though while here they could never conceive it.

§. 5. Christian, look round on the numberless blessings of one kind, and of another, with which you are already encompassed; and advance your prospect still farther, to what faith yet discovers within the veil. Think of those now unknown transports with which thou shalt drop every burden in the grave, and thine immortal spirit shall mount, light and joyful, holy and happy, to God, its original, its support, and its hope; to God, the source of being, of holiness, and of pleasure; to Jesus, through whom all these blessings are derived to thee, and who will appoint thee a throne near his own, to be for ever the spectator and partaker of his glory. Think of the rapture with which thou shalt attend this triumph in the resurrection-day, and receive this poor mouldering corruptible body transformed into his glorious image; and then think, "These hopes are not mine alone, but the hopes of thousands and millions. Multitudes, whom I number among the dearest of my friends upon earth, are rejoicing with me in these apprehensions and views: and God gives me sometimes to see the smiles on their cheeks, the sweet humble hope that sparkles in their eyes, and shines through the tears of tender gratitude; and to hear that little of their inward complacency and joy, which language can express. Yea, and multitudes more, who were once equally dear to me with those, though I have laid them in the grave, and wept over their dust, are living to God, living in the possession of inconceivable delights, and drinking large draughts of the water of life, which flows in perpetual streams at his right hand."

* Acts xxvi. 22. † Gen. xii. 2.

§. 6. O christian, thou art still intimately united and allied to them. Death cannot break a friendship thus cemented, and it ought not to render thee insensible of the happiness of those friends, for whose memory thou retainest so just an honour. They live to God, as his servants; they *serve him, and see his face**; and they make but a small part of that glorious assembly. Millions, equally worthy of thine esteem and affection with themselves, inhabit those blissful regions: and wilt thou not rejoice in their joy? and wilt thou not adore that everlasting spring of holiness and happiness, from whence each of these streams is derived? Yea, I will add, while the blessed angels are so kindly regarding us, while they are ministering to thee, O christian, and bearing thee in their arms, *as an heir of salvation*†, wilt thou not rejoice in their felicity too? And wilt thou not adore that God, who gives them all the superior glory of their more exalted nature, and gives them a heaven, which fills them with blessedness, even while they seem to withdraw from it, that they may attend on thee?

§. 7. This, and infinitely more than this, the blessed God is, and was, and shall ever be. The felicities of the blessed spirits that surround his throne, and thy felicities, O christian, are immortal. These heavenly luminaries shall glow with an undecaying flame, and thou shalt shine and burn among them, when the sun and the stars are gone out. Still shall the unchanging Father of lights pour forth his beams upon them; and the lustre they reflect from him, and their happiness in him, shall be everlasting, shall be ever growing. Bow down, O thou child of God, thou heir of glory, bow down, and let all that is within thee unite in one act of grateful love; and let all that is around thee, all that is before thee in the prospects of an unbounded eternity, concur to elevate and transport thy soul, that thou mayest, as far as possible, begin the work and blessedness of heaven, in falling down before the God of it, in opening thine heart to his gracious influences, and in breathing out before him that incense of praise, which these warm beams of his presence and love have so great a tendency to produce, and to ennoble with a fragrancy resembling that of his paradise above.

The grateful Soul rejoicing in the Blessings of Providence and Grace, and pouring out itself before God in vigorous and affecting Exercises of Love and Praise.

"O MY God, it is enough! I have *mused, and the fire burneth*‡! But Oh, in what language shall the flame break

* Rev. xxiii. 3, 4. † Heb. i. 14. ‡ Psal. xxxix. 3.

forth! What can I say but this, that my heart admires thee, and adores thee, and loves thee! My little vessel is as full as it can hold; and I would pour out all that fulness before thee, that it may grow capable of receiving more and more. Thou art *my hope and my help; my glory, and the lifter up of my head*. My heart rejoiceth in thy salvation*†; and when I set myself under the influences of thy good spirit, to converse with thee, a thousand delightful thoughts spring up at once; a thousand sources of pleasure are unsealed, and flow in upon my soul with such refreshment and joy, that they seem to croud into every moment the happiness of days, and weeks, and months.

"I bless thee, O God, for this soul of mine, which thou hast created; which thou hast taught to say, and I hope to the happiest purpose, *Where is God my Maker*‡*!* I bless thee for the knowledge with which thou hast adorned it. I bless thee for that grace with which, I trust, I may (not without humble wonder) say, thou hast sanctified it; though, alas, the celestial plant is fixed in too barren a soil, and does not flourish to the degree I could wish.

"I bless thee also for that body which thou hast given me, and which thou preservest as yet in its strength and vigour; not only capable of relishing the entertainments which thou providest for its various senses, but (which I esteem far more valuable than any of them for its own sake,) capable of acting with some vivacity in thy service. I bless thee for that ease and freedom, with which these limbs of mine move themselves, and obey the dictates of my spirit, I hope as guided by thine. I bless thee, that *the keepers of the house do not yet tremble, nor the strong men bow themselves; that they that look out of the windows are not yet darkened, nor the daughters of music brought low:* I bless thee, O God of my life, that *the silver cords are not yet loosed, nor the golden bowl broken*§; for it is thine hand that braces all my nerves, and thine infinite skill that prepares those spirits, which flow in so freely, and when exhausted recruit so soon and so plentifully.

"I praise thee for that royal bounty, with which thou providest for the daily support of mankind in general, and for mine in particular; *for the various tables which thou spreadest before me, and for the overflowing cup which thou puttest into my hands*‖. I bless thee, that these bounties of thy providence

* Psal. iii. 3. † Psal. xiii. 5. ‡ Job. xxxv. 10.
§ Eccl. xii. 3, 4, 6. ‖ Psal. xxiii. 12.

do not serve, as it were, to upbraid a disabled appetite, *and are not like messes of meat set before the dead.* I bless thee too that *I eat not my morsel alone**, but share it with so many agreeable friends, who add the relish of a social life, to that of the animal, at our seasons of common repast. I thank thee for so many dear relatives at home, for so many kind friends abroad, who are capable of serving me in various instances, and disposed to make an obliging use of that capacity.

" Nor would I forget to acknowledge thy favour, in rendering me capable of serving others, and giving me in any instances to know, how much *more blessed it is to give than to receive*†. I thank thee for a heart which feels the sorrows of the necessitous, and a mind which can make it my early care and refreshment to contrive, according to my little ability, for their relief: for *this also cometh forth from thee, O Lord*‡, the great author of every benevolent inclination, of every prudent scheme, of every successful attempt to spread happiness around us, or in any instance to lessen distress.

" And surely, O Lord, if I thus acknowledge the pleasures of sympathy with the afflicted, much more must I bless thee for those of sympathy with the happy, with those that are completely blessed. I adore thee for the streams that water Paradise, and maintain it in ever-flourishing, ever-growing delight. I praise thee for the rest, the joy, the transport, thou art giving to many that were once dear to me on earth; whose sorrows it was my labour to soothe, and whose joys, especially in thee, it was the delight of my heart to promote. I praise thee for the blessedness of every saint, and of every angel that surrounds thy throne above; and I praise thee with accents of distinguished pleasure, for that reviving hope which thou hast implanted in my bosom, that I shall, ere long, know by clear sight, and by everlasting experience, what that felicity of theirs is, which I now only discover at a distance, through the comparatively obscure glass of faith. Even now, through thy grace, do I feel myself borne forward by thy supporting arm to those regions of blessedness. Even now, am I *waiting for thy salvation*§, with that ardent desire on the one hand, which its sublime greatness cannot but inspire into the believing soul, and that calm resignation on the other, which the immutability of thy promise establishes.

" And now, O my God, what shall I say unto thee! What, but that I love thee above all the powers of language to ex-

* Job xxxi. 17. † Acts xx. 35. ‡ Isai. xxviii. 29. Gen. xlix. 16.

press! That I love thee for what thou art to thy creatures, who are in their various forms, every moment deriving being, knowledge, and happiness from thee, in numbers and degrees, far beyond what my narrow imagination can conceive. But O I adore and love thee, yet far more, for what thou art in thyself, for those stores of perfection which creation has not diminished, and which can never be exhausted by all the effects of it which thou impartest to thy creatures; that infinite perfection which makes thee thine own happiness, thine own end; amiable, infinitely amiable, and venerable, were all derived excellence and happiness forgot.

"O thou first, thou greatest, thou fairest of all objects! Thou only great, thou only fair, possess all my soul! and surely thou dost possess it. While I thus feel thy sacred spirit breathing on my heart, and exciting these fervours of love to thee, I cannot doubt it any more, than I can doubt the reality of this animal life, while I exert the actings of it, and feel its sensations. Surely if ever I knew the appetite of hunger, my soul *hungers after righteousness**, and longs for a greater conformity to thy blessed nature and holy will. If ever my palate felt thirst, *my soul thirsteth for God, even for the living God*†, and panteth for the more abundant communication of his favour. If ever this body, when wearied with labours or journies, knew what it was to wish for the refreshment of my bed, and rejoice to rest there, my soul with sweet acquiescence rests upon thy gracious bosom, O my heavenly Father, and returns to its repose in the embraces of its God, *who hath dealt so bountifully with it*‡. And if ever I saw the face of a beloved friend with complacency and joy, I rejoice in beholding thy face, O Lord, and in calling thee my Father in Christ. Such thou art, and such thou wilt be, for time and for eternity. What have I more to do, but to commit myself to thee for both? Leaving it to thee to *chuse my inheritance, and to order my affairs for me*§, while all my business is to serve thee, and all my delight to praise thee. *My soul follows hard after God, because his right hand upholds me*‖. Let it still bear me up, and I shall press on towards thee, till all my desires be accomplished in the eternal enjoyment of thee! Amen."

* Mat. v. 6. † Psal. xlii. 2. ‡ Psal. cxvi. 7. § Psal. xlvii. 4. ‖ Psal. lxiii. 8.

CHAP. XXVIII.

The established Christian urged to exert himself for Purposes of Usefulness.

A sincere Love to God will express itself, not only in Devotion, but in Benevolence to Men, §. 1, 2. This is the Command of God, §. 3. The true Christian feels his Soul wrought to a holy Conformity to it: §. 4. And therefore will desire Instruction on this Head, §. 5. Accordingly Directions are given for the Improvement of various Talents: Particularly, (1.) Genius and Learning, §. 6. (2.) Power, §. 7. (3.) Domestic Authority, §. 8. (4.) Esteem, §. 9. (5.) Riches, §. 10. Several good Ways of employing them hinted at, §. 11. Prudence in Expence urged, for the Support of Charity, §. 12, 13. Divine Direction in this Respect to be sought, §. 14. The Christian breathing after more extensive Usefulness.

§ 1. SUCH as I have described in the former chapter, I trust, are and will be the frequent exercises of your soul before God. Thus will your love and gratitude breath itself forth in the divine presence, and will, through Jesus the great Mediator, come up before it as incense, and yield an acceptable savour. But then you must remember, this will not be the only effect of that love to God, which I have suposed so warm in your heart. If it be sincere, it will not spend itself in words alone; but will discover itself in actions, and will produce, as its genuine fruit, an unfeigned love to your fellow-creatures, and an unwearied desire and labour to do them good continually.

§. 2. "Has the great Father of mercies," will you say, "looked upon me with so gracious an eye; has he not only forgiven me ten thousand offences, but enriched me with such a variety of benefits! Oh what shall I render to him for them all! Instruct me, Oh ye oracles of eternal truth! Instruct me, ye elder brethren in the family of my heavenly Father! Instruct me, above all, O thou spirit of wisdom and of love, what I may be able to do, to express my love to the eternal fountain of love, and to approve my fidelity to him, who has already done so much to engage it, and who will take so much pleasure in owning and rewarding it!

§. 3. This, O christian, is the command which we have heard from the beginning, and it will ever continue in unimpaired force, *that he who loveth God, should love his brother also**; and should express that love, *not in word and in profession alone, but in deed and in truth*†. You are to love your neighbour as yourself: to love the whole creation of God;

* 1 John iv. 21. † 1 John iii. 18.

and, so far as your influence can extend, must endeavour to make it happy.

§. 4. "Yes," you will say, and "I do love it. I feel the golden chain of divine love incircling us all, and binding us close to each other, joining us in one body, and diffusing (as it were) one soul through all. May happiness, true and sublime, perpetual and ever-growing happiness, reign through the whole world of God's rational and obedient creatures in Heaven and on Earth! and may every revolted creature, that is capable of being recovered and restored, be made obedient! Yea, may the necessary punishment of those, who are irrecoverable, be overruled by infinite wisdom and love to the good of the whole!"

§. 5. These are right sentiments; and if they are indeed the sentiments of your heart, O reader, and not an empty form of vain words, they will be attended with a serious concern to act in subordination to this great scheme of divine Providence, according to your abilities, in their utmost extent. And to this purpose, they will put you on surveying the peculiar circumstances of your life and being; that you may discover what opportunities of usefulness they now afford, and how those opportunities and capacities may be improved. Enter therefore into such a survey; not that you may pride yourself in the distinction of divine Providence or Grace towards you, or having received, may *glory as if you had not received* *; but that you may deal faithfully with the great proprietor, whose steward you are, and by whom you are intrusted with every talent, which with respect to any claim from your fellow-creatures, you may call your own. And here, *having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us*†, let us hold the balance with an impartial hand, that so we may determine what it is that God requires of us; which is nothing less, than doing the most we can invent, contrive, and effect, for the general good. But, Oh how seldom is this estimate faithfully made! And how much does the world around us, and how much do our own souls suffer, for want of that fidelity!

§. 6. Hath God given you genius and learning? It was not that you might amuse or deck yourself with it, and kindle a blaze which should only serve to attract and dazzle the eyes of men. It was intended to be the means of leading both yourself and them to the Father of lights. And it will be your duty, according to the peculiar turn of that genius and capacity, either to endeavour to improve and adorn human life, or, by a

* 1 Cor. iv. 7. † Rom. xii. 6.

more direct application of it to divine subjects, to plead the cause of religion, to defend its truths, to enforce and recommend its practice, to deter men from courses which would be dishonourable to God and fatal to themselves, and to try the utmost efforts of all the solemnity and tenderness with which you can clothe your addresses, to lead them into the paths of virtue and happiness.

§. 7. Has God invested you with power, whether it be in a larger or smaller society? Remember that this power was given you, that God might be honoured, and those placed under your government, whether domestic or public, might be made happy. Be concerned therefore, that whether you be intrusted with the rod, or the sword, it may not be *borne in vain**. Are you a magistrate? Have you any share in the great and tremendous charge of enacting laws? Reverence the authority of the supreme legislator, the great guardian of society: promote none, consent to none, which you do not in your own conscience esteem, in present circumstances, an intimation of his will; and in the establishment of which you do not firmly believe you shall be *his minister for good*†. Have you the charge of executing laws? Put life into them by a vigorous and strenuous execution, according to the nature of the particular office you bear. Retain not an empty name of authority. Permit not yourself, as it were, to fall asleep on the tribunal. Be active, be wakeful, be observant of what passeth around you. Protect the upright, and the innocent. Break in pieces the power of the oppressor. Unveil every dishonest heart. Disgrace, as well as defeat the wretch, that makes his distinguished abilities the disguise or protection of the wickedness which he ought rather to endeavour to expose, and to drive out of the world with abhorrence.

§. 8. Are you placed only at the head of a private family? Rule it for God. Administer the concerns of that little kingdom with the same views, and on the same principle, which I have been inculcating on the powerful and the great; if by an unexpected accident any of them should suffer their eye to glance upon the passage above. Your children and servants are your natural subjects. Let good order be established among them, and keep them under a regular discipline. Let them be instructed in the principles of religion, that they may know how reasonable such a discipline is; and let them be accustomed to act accordingly. You cannot indeed change their hearts,

* Rom. xiii. 4. † Rom. xiii. 4.

but you may very much influence their conduct; and by that means may preserve them from many snares, may do a great deal to make them good members of society, and may set them, as it were, *in the way of God's steps**, if peradventure passing by he may bless them with the riches of his grace. And fail not to do your utmost to convince them of their need of those blessings; labour to engage them to an high esteem of them, and to an earnest desire of them, as incomparably more valuable than any thing else.

§. 9. Again, has God been pleased to raise you to esteem among your fellow-creatures, which is not always in proportion to a man's rank or possession in human life? Are your counsels heard with attention? Is your company sought? Does God give you good acceptance in the eyes of men, so that they do not only put the fairest construction on your words, but overlook faults of which you are conscious to yourself, and consider your actions and performances in the most indulgent and favourable light? You ought to regard this, not only as a favour of Providence, and as an encouragement to you cheerfully to pursue your duty, in the several branches of it, for the time to come; but also, as giving you much greater opportunities of usefulness, than in your present station you could otherwise have had. If your character has any weight in the world, throw it into the right scale. Endeavour to keep virtue and goodness in countenance. Affectionately give your hand to modest worth, where it seems to be depressed or overlooked; though shining, when viewed in its proper light, with a lustre which you may think much superior to your own. Be an advocate for truth, be a counsellor of peace; be an example of candour; and do all you can to reconcile the hearts of men, and especially of good men, to each other, however they may differ in their opinions about matters which it is possible for good men to dispute. And let the caution and humility of your behaviour in circumstances of such superior eminence, and amidst so many tokens of general esteem, silently reprove the rashness and haughtiness of those, who perhaps are remarkable for little else; or who, if their abilities were indeed considerable, must be despised, and whose talents must be in a great measure lost to the public, till that rashness and haughtiness of spirit be subdued. Nor suffer yourself to be interrupted in this generous and worthy course, by the little attacks of envy and

* Psal lxxxv. 13.

calumny, which you may meet with in it. Be still attentive to the general good, and steadily resolute in your efforts to promote it; and leave it to providence, to guard or to rescue your character from the base assaults of malice and falsehood; which will often, without your labour, confute themselves, and heap upon the authors greater shame, or (if they are inaccessible to that,) greater infamy, than your humanity will allow you to wish them.

§. 10. Once more, Has God blessed you with riches? Has he placed you in such circumstances, that you have more than you absolutely need for the subsistence of yourself and your family? Remember your approaching account. Remember what an incumbrance these things often prove to men in the way of their salvation, and how often, according to our Lord's express declaration, they render it *as difficult to enter into the kingdom of God, as it is for a camel to go through the eye of a needle**. Let it therefore be your immediate, your earnest, and your daily prayer, that riches may not be a snare and a shame to you, as they are to by far the greater part of their possessors. Appropriate, I beseech you, some certain part and proportion of your estate and revenue, to charitable uses; with a provisional increase, as God shall prosper you, in any extraordinary instance. By this means you will always have a fund of charity at hand: and you will probably be more ready to communicate, when you look upon what is so deposited, as not in any sense your own; but as already actually given away to those uses, though not yet affixed to particular objects. It is not for me to say, what that proportion ought to be. To those who have large revenues, and no children, perhaps a third or one half may be too little: to those whose incomes are small, and their charge considerable, though they have something more than is absolutely necessary, it is possible a tenth may be too much. But pray, that God would guide your mind; make a trial for one year, on such terms, as in your conscience you think will be most pleasing to him; and let your observations on that teach you to fix your proportions for the next; always remembering, that he requires justice in the first place, and alms-deeds only so far as may consist with that. Yet at the same time take heed of that treacherous, delusive, and in many instances destructive imagination, "that justice to your own family requires that you should leave your children very rich;" which has perhaps cost some parsimonious parents the lives of those darlings for whom

* Mat. xix. 24.

they laid up the portion of the poor; and what fatal consequences of divine displeasure may attend it to those that yet survive, God only knows; and I heartily pray, that you or yours may never learn by experience.

§. 11. And that your heart may yet be more opened, and that your charity may be directed to the best purposes, let me briefly mention a variety of good uses, which may call for the consideration of those, whom God has in this respect distinguished by an ability to do good. To assist the hints I am to offer, look round on the neighbourhood in which you live. Think how many honest and industrious, perhaps too I might add religious people, are making very hard shifts to struggle through life. Think what a comfort that would be to them, which you might without any inconvenience spare from that abundance which God hath given you.—Hearken also to any extraordinary calls of charity which may happen, especially those of a public nature; and help them forward with your example, and your interest, which perhaps may be of much greater importance than the sum which you contribute, considered in itself. Have a tongue to plead for the necessitous, as well as a hand to relieve them; and endeavour to discountenance those poor shameful excuses, which covetousness often dictates to those, whose art may indeed set some varnish on what they suggest, but so slight a one that the coarse ground will appear through it.—See how many poor children are wandering naked and ignorant about the streets, and in the way to all kinds of vice and misery; and consider what can be done towards cloathing some of them at least, and instructing them in the principles of religion. Would every thriving family in a town, which is able to afford help on such occasions, cast a pitying eye on one poor family in its neighbourhood, and take it under their patronage, to assist in feeding, and cloathing, and teaching the children, in supporting it in affliction, in defending it from wrongs, and in advising those that have the management of it, as circumstances may require, how great a difference would soon be produced in the appearance of things amongst us?—Observe who are sick, that if there be no public infirmary at hand to which you can introduce them, (where your contribution will yield the largest increase) you may do something towards relieving them at home, and supplying them with advice and medicines, as well as with proper diet and attendance.—Consider also the spiritual necessities of men; in providing for which, I should particularly recommend to you

the very important and noble charity of assisting young persons of genius and piety, with what is necessary to support the expence of their education for the ministry, in a proper course of grammatical or academical studies. And grudge not some proportion of what God hath given you, to those who, resigning all temporal views to minister to you the gospel of Christ, have surely an equitable claim to be supported by you, in a capacity of rendering you those services, however laborious, to which for your sakes, and that of our common Lord, they have devoted their lives. And while you are so abundantly *satisfied with the goodness of God's house, even of his own temple**, have compassion on those that dwell in a desart land; and rejoice to do something towards sending among the distant nations of the heathen world, that glorious gospel which hath so long continued unknown to multitudes, though the knowledge of it, with becoming regard, be life everlasting.—These are a few important charities, which I would point out to those, whom providence has enriched with its peculiar bounties: and it renders gold more precious, than it could appear in any other light, that it is capable of being employed for such purposes. But if you should not have gold to spare for them, contribute your silver: or as a farthing, or a mite, is not overlooked by God, when it is given *from a truly generous, and charitable heart*†, let that be cheerfully dropped into the treasury, where richer offerings cannot be afforded.

§. 12. And, that amidst so many pressing demands for charity, you may be better furnished to answer them, seriously reflect on your manner of living. I say not, that God requires you should become one of the many poor, relieved out of your income. The support of society, as at present established, will not only permit, but require, that some persons should allow themselves in the elegancies and delights of life; by furnishing which multitudes of poor families are much more creditably and comfortably subsisted, with greater advantage to themselves, and safety to the public, than they could be, if the price of their labours, or of the commodities in which they deal, were to be given them as an alms: nor can I imagine it grateful to God, that his gifts should be refused, as if they were meant for snares and curses, rather than benefits. This were to frustrate the benevolent purposes of the gracious Father of mankind, and if carried to its rigour, would be a sort of conspiracy against the whole system of nature. Let the bounties

* Psal. lxv. 4. † Mark xii. 42, 43.

of providence be used; but let us carefully see to it, that it be in a moderate and prudent manner, lest by your own folly, *that which should have been for our welfare, become a trap**. Let conscience say, my dear reader, with regard to yourself, what proportion of the good things you possess, your heavenly Father intends for yourself, and what for your brethren; and live not as if you had no brethren, as if pleasing yourself, in all the magnificence and luxury you can devise, were the end for which you were sent into the world. I fear this is the excess of the present age, and not an excess of rigour and mortification. Examine therefore your expences, and compare them with your income. That may be shamefully extravagant in you, which may not only be pardonable, but commendable in another of superior estate. Nor can you be sure that you do not exceed, merely because you do not plunge yourself in debt, nor render yourself incapable of laying up any thing for your family. If you be disabled from doing any thing for the poor, or any thing proportionable to your rank in life, by that genteel and elegant way of living which you affect, God must disapprove of such a conduct; and you ought, as you will answer it to him, to retrench it. And though the divine indulgence will undoubtedly be exercised to those in whom there is a sincere principle of faith in Christ, and undissembled love to God and man, though it act not to that height of beneficence and usefulness which might have been attained; yet be assured of this, that he who rendereth to every one according to his works, will have a strict regard to the degrees of goodness in the distribution of final rewards: so that every neglected opportunity draws after it an irreparable loss, which will go into eternity along with you. And let me add too, that every instance of negligence indulged, renders the mind still more and more indolent and weak, and consequently more indisposed to recover the ground which has been lost, or even to maintain that which has been hitherto kept.

§. 13. Complain not, that this is imposing hard things upon you. I am only directing your pleasures into a nobler channel; and indeed that frugality which is the source of such a generosity, far from being at all injurious to your reputation, will rather, amongst wise and good men, greatly promote it. But you have far nobler motives before you, than those which arise from their regards. I speak to you as to a child of God, and a member of Christ; as joined therefore by the most intimate

* Psal. lxix. 22.

union to all the poorest of those that believe in him. I speak to you as to an heir of eternal glory, who ought therefore to have sentiments great and sublime, in some proportion to that expected inheritance.

§. 14. Cast about therefore in your thoughts, what good is to be done, and what you can do, either in your own person, or by your interest with others; and go about it with resolution, as in the name and presence of the Lord. And as *the Lord giveth wisdom, and out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding**, go to the footstool of his throne, and there seek that guidance and that grace which may suit your present circumstances, and may be effectual to produce the fruits of holiness and usefulness, to his more abundant glory, and to the honour of your christian profession.

The established Christian breathing after more extensive Usefulness.

"O BOUNTIFUL Father, and sovereign author of all good, whether natural or spiritual! I bless thee for the various talents with which thou hast enriched so undeserving a creature, as I must acknowledge myself to be. My soul is in the deepest confusion before thee, when I consider to how little purpose I have hitherto improved them. Alas! what have I done, in proportion to what thou mightest reasonably have expected, with the gifts of nature which thou hast bestowed upon me, with my capacities of life, with my time, with my possessions, with my influence over others! Alas! through my own negligence and folly, I look back on a barren wilderness, where I might have seen a fruitful field, and a springing harvest! Justly do I indeed deserve to be stripped of all, to be brought to an immediate account for all, to be condemned as in many respects unfaithful to thee, and to the world, and to my own soul; and in consequence of that condemnation, to be cast into the prison of eternal darkness! But thou, Lord, hast freely forgiven the dreadful debt of ten thousand talents. Adored be thy name for it! Accept, O Lord, accept that renewed surrender, which I would now make of myself and of all I have unto thy service! I acknowledge that it is *of thine own that I give thee*†. Make me I beseech thee, a faithful steward for my great Lord; and may I think of no separate interest of my own, in opposition to thine!

* Prov. ii. 6. † 1 Chron. xxix. 14.

"I adore thee, O thou God of all grace, if while I am thus speaking to thee, I feel the love of thy creatures arising in my soul; if I feel my heart opening to embrace my brethren of mankind! Oh make me thy faithful almoner, in distributing to them all that thou hast lodged in mine hand for their relief! And in determining what is my own share, may I hold the balance with an equal hand, and judge impartially between myself and them! The proportion thou allowest, may I thankfully take to myself, and those who are immediately mine! The rest may I distribute with wisdom, and fidelity, and cheerfulness! Guide mine hand, O ever merciful Father, while thou dost me the honour to make me thine instrument in dealing out a few of thy bounties; that I may bestow them where they are most needed, and where they will answer the best end! And if it be thy gracious will, do thou *multiply the seed sown**; prosper me in my worldly affairs, that I may have more to impart to them that need it; and thus lead me on to the region of everlasting plenty, and everlasting benevolence! There may I meet with many, to whom I have been an affectionate benefactor on earth; and if it be thy blessed will, with many, whom I have also been the means of conducting into the path to that blissful abode! There may they entertain me in their habitations of glory! And in time and eternity, do thou, Lord, accept the praise of all, through Jesus Christ; at whose feet I would bow; and at whose feet after the most useful course, I would at last die, with as much humility as if I were then exerting the first act of faith upon him, and never had any opportunity, by one tribute of obedience and gratitude in the services of life, to approve its sincerity!"

* 2 Chron. ix. 10.

CHAP. XXIX.

The Christian rejoicing in the Views of Death and Judgment.

Death and Judgment are near; but the Christian has Reason to welcome both: §. 1. Yet Nature recoils from the Solemnity of them, §. 2. An Attempt to reconcile the Mind, [I.] To the Prospect of Death, §. 3. From the Consideration, (1.) Of the many Evils that surround us in this mortal Life, §. 4. (2.) Of the Remainder of Sin which we feel within us, §. 5. And, (3.) Of the Happiness which is immediately to succeed Death, §. 6. 7. All which might make the Christian willing to die in the most agreeable Circumstances of Human Life, §. 8. [II.] The Christian has Reason to rejoice in the Prospect of Judgment, §. 9. Since, however awful it be, Christ will then come, to vindicate his Honour, to display his Glory, and to triumph over his Enemies, §. 10. as also to complete the Happiness of every Believer, §. 11. and of the whole Church, §. 12, 13. The Meditation of a Christian whose Heart is warm with these Prospects.

§. 1. WHEN the visions of the Lord were closing upon John, the beloved disciple, in the island of Patmos, it is observable, that he who gave him that revelation, even Jesus the faithful and true witness, concludes with those lively and important words: *He who testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly:* and John answered with the greatest readiness and pleasure, *Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus* !* Come, as thou hast said, surely and quickly!—And remember, O christian, whoever you are that are now reading these words, your divine Lord speaks in the same language to you: *Behold, I come quickly.* Yes, very quickly will he come by death, to turn the key, to open the door of the grave for thine admittance thither, and to lead thee through it into the now unknown regions of the invisible world. Nor is it long before *the judge who standeth at the door*†, will appear also to the universal judgment: and though, perhaps, not only scores, but hundreds of years may lie between that period and the present moment, yet it is but a very small point of time to him, who at once views all the unmeasurable ages of a past and future eternity. *A thousand years are with him but as one day, and one day as a thousand years*‡. In both these senses then does he come quickly: and I trust, you can answer with a glad amen, that the warning is not terrible, or unpleasant to your ears; but rather, that his coming, his certain, his speedy coming, is the object of your delightful hope, and of your longing expectation.

* Rev. xxii. 20. † James v. 9. ‡ 2 Pet. iii. 8.

§. 2. I am sure it is reasonable it should be so; and yet perhaps nature, fond of life, and unwilling to part with a long known abode, to enter on a state to which it is entirely a stranger, may recoil from the thoughts of dying; or struck with the awful pomp of an expiring and dissolving world, may look on the judgment-day with some mixture of terror. And therefore, my dear brother in the Lord, (for as such I can now esteem you,) I would reason with you a little on this head, and would intreat you to look more attentively on this solemn object, which will, I trust, grow less disagreeable to you, as it is more familiarly viewed. Nay, I hope, that instead of starting back from it, you will rather spring forward towards it with joy and delight.

§. 3. Think, O christian, when Christ comes to call you away by death, he comes——to set you at liberty from your present sorrows,——to deliver you from your struggles with remaining corruption,——and to receive you to dwell with himself in complete holiness and joy. You shall *be absent from the body, and be present with the Lord**.

§. 4. He will indeed call you away from this world. But Oh, what is this world, that you should be fond of it, and cling to it with so much eagerness? How low are all those enjoyments that are peculiar to it; and how many its vexations, its snares, and its sorrows? Review your pilgrimage thus far; and though you must acknowledge, that *goodness and mercy have followed you all the days of your life*†, yet has not that very mercy itself planted some thorns in your paths, and given you some wise and necessary, yet painful intimations, that *this is not your rest*‡! Review the moments of your withered joys, of your blasted hopes; if there be yet any monuments of them remaining more than a mournful remembrance they have left behind in your afflicted heart. Look upon the graves that have swallowed up many of your dearest and most amiable friends, perhaps in the very bloom of life, and in the greatest intimacy of your converse with them; and reflect, that if you hold it out a few years more, death will renew its conquests at your expence, and devour the most precious of those that yet survive. View the living, as well as the dead: behold the state of human nature, under the many grievous marks of its apostacy from God; and say, whether a wise and good man would wish to continue always here. Methinks were I myself secure from being reached by

* 2 Cor. v. 8. † Psal. xxiii. 6. ‡ Mich. ii. 10.

any of the arrows that fly around me, I could not but mourn to see the wounds that are given by them, and to hear th groans of those that are continually falling under them. Th diseases and calamities of mankind are so many, and (whic is most grievous of all) the distempers of their minds are s various, and so threatening, that the world appears almos like an hospital: and a man, whose heart is tender, is ready to feel his spirits broken as he walks through it, and survey the sad scene; especially when he sees how little he can d for the recovery of those whom he pities. Are you a christian, and does it not pierce your heart to see how huma nature is sunk in vice, and in shame? to see, with wha amazing insolence some are making themselves openly vile; an how the name of Christ is dishonoured by too many that ca themselves his people? to see the unlawful deeds and filth practices of them that live ungodly, and to behold, at the sam time, the infirmities at least, and irregularities of those, con cerning whom we have better hopes? And do you not wis to escape from such a world, where a righteous and compas sionate *soul must be vexed from day to day* by so many specta cles of sin and misery*?

§. 5. Yea, to come nearer home, do you not feel something within you, which you long to quit, and which would imbitte even paradise itself? Something which, were it to continue, would grieve and distress you even in the society of the blessed? Do you not feel a remainder of indwelling sin; the sad conse quence of the original revolt of our nature from God? Are you not struggling every day with some residue of corruption, or at least mourning on account of the weakness of your graces? Do you not often find your spirits dull and languid, when you would desire to raise them to the greatest fervour in the service of God? Do you not find your hearts too often insensible of the [illegible] of his love, and your hands feeble in his [illegible] even when [illegible] with you*? Does not your [illegible] appear a low unprofitable thing, [illegible] it ought to be, and [illegible] not frequently, as [illegible] and saying, *Oh that I [illegible] away and be at rest!*

§ [illegible] the thought, that Jesus [illegible] That he comes to [illegible] largest desires of your [illegible] has inspired? That he

* [illegible] ‡ Psal. lv. 6.

comes to open upon you a world of purity and joy, of active, exalted, and unwearied services?

§. 7. O christian, how often have you cast a longing eye towards those happy shores, and wished to pass the sea, the boisterous, unpleasant, dangerous sea, that separates you from them? When your Lord has condescended to make you a short visit in his ordinances on earth, how have you blest the time and the place, and pronounced it, amidst many other disadvantages of situation, to be *the very gate of heaven** ? And is it so delightful to behold this gate, and will it not be much more so to enter into it? Is it so delightful to receive the visits of Jesus for an hour, and will it not be infinitely more so to dwell with him for ever? "Lord," may you well say, "when I dwell with thee, I shall dwell in holiness, for thou thyself art holiness; I shall dwell in love, for thou thyself art love; I shall dwell in joy, for thou art the fountain of joy, as *thou art in the Father, and the Father in thee*†. Bid welcome to his approach therefore, to take you at your word, and to fulfil to you that saying of his, on which your soul has so often rested with heavenly peace and pleasure; *Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me*‡.

§. 8. Surely you may say in this view, "The sooner Christ comes, the better." What though the residue of your days be cut off in the midst? What though you leave many expected pleasures in life untasted, and many schemes unaccomplished? Is it not enough, that what is taken from a mortal life shall be added to a glorious eternity; and that you shall spend those days and years in the presence and service of Christ in heaven, which you might otherwise have spent with him, and for him, in the imperfect enjoyments and labours on earth?

§. 9. But your prospects reach, not only beyond death, but beyond the separate state. For with regard to his final appearance to judgment our Lord says, "Surely I come quickly," in the sense illustrated before: and so it will appear to us if we compare this interval of time with the blissful eternity which is to succeed it; and probably, if we compare it with those ages which have already passed, since the sun began to measure out to earth its days and its years. And will you not here also sing your part in the joyful anthem. *Amen; even so come, Lord Jesus!*

* Gen. xxviii. 17. † John xvii. 21. ‡ John xvii. 24.

§. 10. It is true, christian, it is an awful day; a day in which nature shall be thrown into a confusion as yet unknown. No earthquake, no eruption of burning mountains, no desolation of cities by devouring flames, or of countries by overflowing rivers or seas, can give any just emblem of that dreadful day; when *the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, as well as the earth, and all that is therein shall be burnt up**; when all nature shall flee away in amazement, *before the face of the universal judge*†, and there shall be a great cry, far beyond what was known in the land of Egypt, when *there was not a house in which there was not one dead*‡. Your flesh may be ready to tremble at the view; yet your spirit must surely *rejoice in God your Saviour* §. You may justly say, "Let this illustrious day come, even with all its horrors!" Yea, like the christians described by the apostle, you may *be looking for, and hastening to that day* ‖ of terrible brightness and universal doom. For your Lord will then come, to vindicate the justice of those proceedings which have been in many instances so much obscured, and because they have been obscured have been also blasphemed. He will come to display his magnificence, descending from heaven *with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God* ¶; taking his seat upon a throne infinitely exceeding that of earthly, or even of celestial princes, clothed with *his Father's glory and his own* **; surrounded with a numberless host of shining attendants, when *coming to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe*††. His enemies shall also be produced to grace his triumph: the serpent shall be seen there rolling in the dust, and trodden under foot by him and by all his servants: those, who once condemned him, shall tremble at his presence: and those who bowed the knee before him in profane mockery, shall in wild despair *call to the mountains to fall upon them, and to the rocks to hide them from the face of that Lamb of God* ‡‡, whom they once led away to the most inhuman slaughter.

§. 11. O christian, does not your loyal heart bound at the thought? and are you not ready, even while you read these lines, to begin the victorious shout in which you are then to join? He justly expects, that your thoughts shall be greatly elevated and impressed with the views of his triumph; but at the same time he permits you to remember your own personal share in the joy and glory of that blessed day: and even now he has the

* 2 Pet. iii. 10, 12. † Rev. xx. 11. ‡ Exod. xii. 30. § Luke i. 47. ‖ 2 Pet. iii. 12.
¶ 1 Thess. iv. 16. ** Luke ix. 26. †† 2 Thess. i. 10. ‡‡ Rev. vi. 16.

view before him, of what his power and love shall then accomplish for your salvation. And what shall it not accomplish? He shall come to break the bars of the grave, and to re-animate your sleeping clay. Your bodies must indeed be laid in the dust, and be lodged there as a testimony of God's displeasure against sin; against the first sin that ever was committed, from the sad consequences of which the dearest of his children cannot be exempted. But you shall then have an ear to hear the voice of the Son of God, and an eye to behold the lustre of his appearance; and shall *shine forth like the sun**, arising in the clear heaven, *which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber*†. Your soul shall be new dressed, to grace this high solemnity; and be clothed not with the rags of mortality, but with the robes of glory; for he *shall change this vile body, to fashion it like his own glorious body*‡. And when you are thus royally arrayed, he shall confer public honours on you, and on all his people before the assembled world. You may now perhaps be loaded with infamy, called by reproachful names, and charged with crimes, or with views which your very soul abhors: but he will then *bring forth your righteousness as the light* §, *and your salvation as a lamp that burneth* ‖. Though you have been dishonoured by men, you shall be acknowledged by God; and though treated *as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things* ¶, he will shew you that he regards you *as his treasure, in the day that he makes up his jewels***. *When he shall put away all the wicked of the earth like dross*††, you shall be pronounced righteous in that full assembly; and though indeed you have broken the divine law, and might in strict justice have been condemned, yet being clothed with the righteousness of the great Redeemer, even *that righteousness which is of God by faith* ‡‡, justice itself shall acquit you, and join with mercy in *bestowing upon you a crown of life* §§. Christ will *confess you before men and angels* ‖‖, will pronounce you *good and faithful servants*, and call you to *enter into the joy of your Lord* ¶¶: he will speak of you with endearment as his brethren, and will acknowledge the kindnesses which have been shewn to you, as if he had *received them in his own person****. Yea, then shall you, O christian, who may perhaps have sat in some of the lowest places in our assemblies, though (it may be) none of the rich and great of the earth would condescend to look upon, or

* Mat. xiii. 43. † Psal. xix. 5. ‡ Phil. iii. 21. § Psal. xxxvii. 6.
‖ Isai lxii. 1. ¶ 1 Cor. iv. 13. ** Mal. iii. 17. †† Psal. cxix. 119.
‡‡ Phil. iii. 9. §§ 2 Tim. iv. 8. ‖‖ Luke xii. 8. ¶¶ Mat. xxv. 21.
*** Mat. xxv. 40.

to speak to you, be called to be assessors with Christ on his judgment seat, and to join with him in the sentence he shall pass on wicked men, and rebellious angels.

§. 12. Nor is it merely one day of glory and of triumph. But when the judge arises and ascends to his Father's court, all the blessed shall ascend with him, and you among the rest: you shall ascend together with your Saviour, *to his Father, and your Father, to his God and your God**. You shall go to make your appearance in the New Jerusalem, in those new shining forms that you have received, which will no doubt be attended with a correspondent improvement of mind; and take up your perpetual abode in that fulness of joy, with which you shall be filled and satisfied *in the presence of God*†, upon the consummation of that happiness, which the saints in the intermediate state have been wishing and waiting for. You shall go, from the ruins of a dissolving world, to *the new Heavens and new Earth, wherein righteousness for ever dwells*‡. There all the number of God's elect shall be accomplished, and the happiness of each shall be completed. The whole society shall be *presented before God, as the bride, the Lamb's wife*§, whom the eye of its celestial bridegroom shall survey with unutterable delight, and confess to be *without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing* ‖; its character and state being just what he originally designed it to be, when he first engaged to *give himself for it, to redeem it to God by his blood*¶. *So shall you ever be with each other, and with the Lord* **; and immortal ages shall roll away, and find you still unchanged: your happiness always the same, and your relish for it the same; or rather ever growing, as your souls are approaching nearer and nearer to him, who is the source of happiness, and the centre of infinite perfection.

§. 13. And now, look round about upon earth, and single out, if you can, the enjoyments or the hopes, for the sake of which you would say, Lord, delay thy coming; or for the sake of which you any more should hesitate to express your longing for it, and to cry, Even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

The Meditation and Prayer of a Christian whose Heart is warmed with these Prospects.

"O BLESSED Lord! My soul is enkindled in these views, and rises to thee *in the flame*††. Thou hast testified, thou comest quickly: and I repeat my joyful assent, *Amen, even so*

* John xx. 17. † Psal. xvi. 11. ‡ 2 Pet. iii. 13. § Rev. xxi. 9.
‖ Eph. v. 27. ¶ Rev. v. 9. ** 1 Thess. iv. 17. †† Judg. xiii. 20.

*come, Lord Jesus**. Come, for I long to have done with this low life: to have done with its burdens, its sorrows, and its snares! Come, for I long to ascend into thy presence, and to see the court thou art holding above!

" Blessed Jesus, death is transformed, when I view it in this light. The King of terrors is seen no more as such, so near the King of glory, and of grace. I hear with pleasure the sound of thy feet, approaching still nearer and nearer: draw aside the veil, whenever thou pleasest: open the bars of my prison, that my eager soul may spring forth to thee, and cast itself at thy feet; at the feet of that Jesus, *whom having not seen, I love; and in whom, though now I see thee not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory*†! Thou, Lord, shalt shew me the path of life: thine hand shall guide me to thy blissful abode, where there is *fulness of joy*, and *rivers of everlasting pleasure*‡. Thou shalt assign me an habitation with thy faithful servants, whose separate spirits are now living with thee, while their bodies sleep in the dust. Many of them have been my companions in thy laborious work, and in the *patience and tribulation of thy kingdom*§; my dear companions, and my brethren. Oh shew me, blessed Saviour, how glorious and how happy thou hast made them! Shew me, to what new forms of better life thou hast conducted them, whom we call the dead! in what nobler and more extensive services thou hast employed them! that I may praise thee better than I now can, for thy goodness to them! and Oh give me to share with them in their blessings and their services, and to raise a song of grateful love, like that which they are breathing forth before thee!

" Yet, O my blessed Redeemer, even there will my soul be aspiring to a yet nobler and more glorious hope; and from this as yet unknown splendor and felicity, shall I be drawing new arguments to look and long for the day of thy final appearance. There shall I long more ardently than I now do, to see thy conduct vindicated, and thy triumph displayed; to see the dust of thy servants re-animated, and death, the last of their enemies and of thine, *swallowed up in victory*‖. I shall long for that superior honour that thou intendest me, and that complete bliss to which the whole body of thy people shall be conducted. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, will mingle itself with the songs of Paradise, and sound from the tongues of all the millions of thy saints, whom thy grace hath transplanted thither.

* Rev. xxii. 20. † 1 Pet. i. 8. ‡ Psal. xvi. 11. § Rev. i. 9. ‖ 1 Cor. xv. 26, 54.

"In the mean time, O my divine Master, accept the homage which a grateful heart now pays thee, in a sense of the glorious hopes with which thou hast inspired it! It is thou that hast put this joy into it, and hast raised my soul to this glorious ambition; whereas I might otherwise have now been groveling in the lowest trifles of time and sense, and been looking with horror on that hour, which is now the object of my most ardent wishes.

"Oh be with me always even to the end of this mortal life! and give me, while waiting for thy salvation, to be doing thy commandments! May my *loins be girded about, and my lamp burning* *; and mine ears be still watchful for the blessed signal of thine arrival: that my glowing soul may with pleasure spring to meet thee, and be strengthened by death to bear those visions of glory, under the ecstacies of which feeble mortality would now expire!"

CHAP. XXX.

The Christian honouring God by his dying Behaviour.

Reflections on the Sincerity with which the preceding Advices have been given, §. 1. The Author is desirous, that (if Providence permit) he may assist the Christian to die honourably and comfortably, §. 2, 3. With this View it is advised, (1.) To rid the Mind of all earthly Cares, §. 4. (2.) To renew the Humiliation of the Soul before God, and its Application to the Blood of Christ, §. 5. (3.) To exercise Patience under bodily Pains and Sorrows, §. 6. (4.) At leaving the World, to bear an honourable Testimony to Religion, §. 7. (5.) To give a solemn Charge to surviving Friends, §. 8. especially recommending Faith in Christ, §. 9. (6.) To keep the Promises of God in View, §. 10, 11. And (7.) To commit the departing Spirit to God in the genuine Exercises of Gratitude and Repentance, Faith and Charity; §. 12. which are exemplified in the concluding Meditation and Prayer.

§. 1. THUS, my dear reader, I have endeavoured to lead you through a variety of circumstances; and those not fancied or imaginary, but such as do indeed occur in the human and christian life. And I can truly and cheerfully say, that I have marked out to you the path which I myself have trod, and in which it is my desire still to go on. I have ventured my own everlasting interests on that foundation, on which I have directed you to adventure yours. What I have recommended as the grand business of your life, I desire to make the business of my own:

* Luke xii. 35.

and the most considerable enjoyments, which I expect or desire in the remaining days of my pilgrimage on earth, are such as I have directed you to seek, and endeavoured to assist you in attaining. Such love to God, such constant activity in his service, such pleasurable views of what lies beyond the grave, appear to me, (God is my witness,) a felicity incomparably beyond any thing else which can offer itself to our affection and pursuit: and I would not for ten thousand worlds, resign my share in them, or consent even to the suspension of the delights which they afford, during the remainder of my abode here.

§. 2. I would humbly hope, through the divine blessing, that the hours you have spent in the review of these plain things, may have turned to some profitable account; and that in consequence of what you have read, you have been either brought into the way of life and peace, or been induced to quicken your pace in it. Most heartily should I rejoice in being further useful to you, and that even to the last. Now there is one scene remaining; a scene, through which you must infallibly pass; which has something in it so awful, that I cannot but attempt doing a little to assist you in it: I mean the dark valley of the shadow of death. I could earnestly wish, that for the credit of your profession, the comfort of your own soul, and the joy and edification of your surviving friends, you might die, not only safely, but honourably too: and therefore I would offer you a few parting advices. I am sensible indeed, that Providence may determine the circumstances of your death in such a manner, as that you may have no opportunity of acting upon the hints I now give you. Some unexpected accident from without, or from within, may, as it were, whirl you to Heaven before you are aware; and you may find yourself so suddenly there, that it may seem a translation, rather than a death. Or it is possible the force of a distemper may affect your understanding in such a manner, that you may be quite insensible of the circumstances in which you are; and so your dissolution (though others may see it visibly and certainly approaching,) may be as great a surprise to you, as if you had died in full health.

§. 3. But as it is on the whole probable, you may have a more sensible passage out of time into eternity; and as much may, in various respects, depend on your dying behaviour; give me leave to propose some plain directions with relation to it, to be practised, if God give you opportunity, and remind you of them. It may not be improper to look over the xxixth chapter again, when you find the symptoms of any threatening

disorder: and I the rather hope, that what I say may be useful to you, as methinks I find myself disposed to address you with something of that peculiar tenderness which we feel for a dying friend; to whom, as we expect that we shall speak to him no more, we send out, as it were, all our hearts in every word.

§. 4. I would advise then, in the first place, "that as soon as possible, you would endeavour to get rid of all further care with regard to your temporal concerns, by settling them in time in as reasonable and christian a manner as you can." I could wish, there may be nothing of that kind to hurry your mind when you are least able to bear it, or to distress or divide those who come after you. Do that which in the presence of God you judge most equitable, and which you verily believe will be most pleasing to him. Do it in as prudent and effectual a manner as you can; and then consider the world as a place you have quite done with, and its affairs as nothing further to you, more than to one actually dead; unless as you may do any good to its inhabitants, while you yet continue among them, and may, by any circumstance in your last actions or words in life, leave a blessing behind you to those who have been your friends and fellow-travellers, while you have been dispatching that journey through it, which you are now finishing.

§. 5. That you may be the more at leisure, and the better prepared for this, "enter into some serious review of your own state, and endeavour to put your soul into as fit a posture as possible, for your solemn appearance before God." For a solemn thing indeed it is, to go into his immediate presence; to stand before him, not as a supplicant at the throne of his grace, but at his bar as a separate spirit, whose time of probation is over, and whose eternal state is to be immediately determined. Renew your humiliation before God for the imperfections of your life, though it has in the main been devoted to his service. Renew your application to the mercies of God as promised in the covenant of grace, and to the blood of Christ as the blessed channel in which they flow. Resign yourself entirely to the divine disposal and conduct, as willing to serve God, either in this world or the other, as he shall see fit. And sensible of your sinfulness on the one hand, and of the divine wisdom and goodness on the other, summon up all the fortitude of your soul to bear as well as you can whatever his afflicting hand may further lay upon you, and to receive the last stroke of it, as one who would maintain the most entire subjection to the great and good Father of spirits.

§. 6. Whatever you suffer endeavour to shew "yourself an

example of patience." Let that amiable grave *have its perfect work** ; and since it has so little more to do, let it close the scene nobly. Let there not be a murmuring word ; and that there may not, watch against every repining thought : and when you feel any thing of that kind arising, look by faith upon a dying Saviour, and ask your own heart, " Was not his cross much more painful, than the bed on which I lie ? Was not his situation among blood-thirsty enemies infinitely more terrible, than mine amidst the tenderness and care of so many affectionate friends ? Did not the heavy load of my sins press him in a much more overwhelming manner, than I am pressed by the load of these afflictions ? and yet he bore all *as a lamb that is brought to the slaughter*†. Let the remembrance of his sufferings be a means to sweeten yours ; yea, let it cause you to rejoice, when you are called to bear the cross for a little while, before you wear the crown. Count it all joy, that you have an opportunity yet once more of honouring God by your patience, which is now acting its last part, and will in a few days, perhaps in a few hours, be superseded by complete everlasting blessedness. And I am willing to hope, that in these views you will not only suppress all passionate complaints, but that your mouth will be filled with the praises of God ; and that you will be speaking to those that are about you, not only of his justice, but of his goodness too. So that you will be enabled to communicate your inward joy in such a manner as may be a lively and edifying comment upon those words of the apostle, *Tribulation worketh patience ; and patience, experience ; and experience, hope ; even a hope which maketh not ashamed, while the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us*‡.

§. 7. And now, my dear friend, " now is the time, when it is especially expected from you, that you bear an honourable testimony to religion." Tell those that are about you, as well as you can, (for you will never be able fully to express it,) what comfort and support you have found in it. Tell them how it has brightened the darkest circumstances of your life : tell them, how it now reconciles you to the near views of death. Your words will carry with them a peculiar weight at such a season : there will be a kind of eloquence, even in the infirmities with which you are struggling, while you give them utterance ; and you will be heard with attention, with tenderness, with credit. And therefore, when the time of your departure is at

* Jam. i. 4. † Isai. liii. 7. ‡ Rom. v. 3, 4, 5.

hand, with unaffected freedom breathe out your joy, if you then feel (as I hope you will,) an holy joy and delight in God. Breathe out however your inward peace and serenity of mind, if you be then peaceful and serene: others will mark it, and be encouraged to tread the steps which lead to so happy an end. Tell them what you feel of the vanity of the world; and they may learn to regard it less. Tell them what you feel of the substantial supports of the gospel; and they may learn to value it more: for they cannot but know, that they must lie down on a dying bed too, and must then need all the relief which the gospel itself can give them.

§. 8. And to enforce the conviction the more, "give a solemn charge to those that are about you, that they spend their lives in the service of God, and govern themselves by the principles of real religion. You may remember, that Joshua, and David, and other good men did so; when they perceived that the days drew near in which they should die. And you know not, how the admonitions of a dying friend, or (as it may be with respect to some,) of a dying parent, may impress those who have disregarded what you and others may have said to them before. At least, make the trial, and die labouring to glorify God to save souls, and generously to sow the seeds of goodnes and happiness in a world, where you have no more harvests to reap. Perhaps they may spring up in a plentiful crop, when the clods of the valley are covering your body: but if not, God will approve it; and the angels, that wait around your bed to receive your departing soul, will look upon each other with marks of approbation in their countenance, and own that this is to expire like a christian, and to make a glorious improvement of mortality.

§. 9. And in this last address to your fellow mortals, whoever they are that providence brings near you, "be sure that you tell them how entirely and how cheerfully your hopes and dependence on this season of the last extremity are fixed, not upon your own merits and obedience, but on what the great Redeemer has done and suffered for sinners." Let them see, that you die, as it were, at the foot of the cross: nothing will be so comfortable to yourselves, nothing so edifying to them. Let the name of Jesus, therefore, be in your mouth, while you are able to speak, and when you can speak no longer, let it be in your heart, and endeavour that the last act of your soul, while it continues in the body, may be an act of humble faith in Christ. Come unto God by him: enter into that which is within the veil, as with the blood of sprinkling afresh upon

you. It is an awful thing for such a sinner, (as you, my christian friend, with all the virtues the world may have admired, know yourself to be,) to stand before that infinitely pure and holy being, who has seen all your ways, and all your heart, and has a perfect knowledge of every mixture of imperfection which has attended the best of your duties: but venture in that way, and you will find it both safe and pleasant.

§. 10. Once more, "to give you comfort in a dying hour, and to support your feeble steps while you are travelling through this dark and painful way, take the word of God as a staff in your hand." Let books and mortal friends, now do their last office for you. Call, if you can, some experienced christian, who has felt the power of the word of God upon his own heart; and let him bring the scripture, and turn you to some of those precious promises, which have been the food and rejoicing of his own soul. It is with this view that I may carry the good office I am now engaged in as far as possible, I shall here give you a collection of a few such admirable scriptures, each of them *infinitely more valuable than thousands of gold and silver**. And to convince you of the degree in which I esteem them, I will take the freedom to add, that I desire they may (if God give an opportunity,) be read over to me, as I lie on my dying bed, with short intervals between them, that I may pause upon each, and renew something of that delightful relish, which, I bless God, I have often found in them. May your soul and mine be then composed to a sacred silence, (whatever be the commotion of animal nature,) while the voice of God speaks to us, in language which he spake to his servants of old, or in which he instructed them how they should speak to him in circumstances of the greatest extremity!

§. 11. Can any more encouragement be wanting, when he says, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee, with the right-hand of my righteousness†." And "he is not a man that he should lie, or the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good‡?"—"The Lord is my light, and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid§?" "This God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death‖." Therefore, "though I walk through the valley of the shadow

* Psal. cxix. 72. † Isai. xli. 10. ‡ Numb. xxiii. 19.
§ Psal. xxvii. 1. ‖ Psal. xlviii. 14.

of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me*." "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord†." "O continue thy loving kindness unto them that know thee, and thy righteousness to the upright in heart! For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light‡." "Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right-hand there are pleasures for evermore§." "As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness‖." "For I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him until that day¶." "Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth, my flesh also shall rest in hope**." "For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again; those also that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him††."—I give unto my sheep eternal life," (said Jesus, the good shepherd,) "and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand‡‡." "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that believeth on me, should have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day§§." "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, there may ye be also‖‖." "Go tell my brethren, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God¶¶." "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them***."—"He that testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen: even so come, Lord Jesus†††!" "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory! Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ‡‡‡."

§. 12. Thus may that God who knows the souls of his children *in all their adversities*§§§, *and in whose sight the death of his saints is precious*‖‖‖, cheer and support you and me in those

* Psal. xxiii. 4. † Gen. xlix. 18. ‡ Psal xxxvi. 9, 14. § Psal. xvi. 11.
‖ Psal. xvii. 15. ¶ 2 Tim. i. 12. ** Psal. xvi. 9. †† 1 Thess. iv. 14.
‡‡ John x. 28. §§ John vi. 40. ‖‖ John xiv. 1, 2, 3. ¶¶ John xx. 17.
*** John xvii. 24, 26. ††† Rev. xxii. 20. ‡‡‡ 1 Cor. xv. 55, 57. §§§ Psal. xxxi. 7.
‖‖‖ Psal. cxvi. 15.

last extremities of nature! May he add us to the happy number of those who have been more than conquerors in death! And may he give us those supplies of his spirit, which may enable us to pour out our departing souls in such sentiments as those I would now suggest; though we should be no longer able to utter words, or to understand them if they were to be read to us! Let us at least review them with all proper affections now, and lay up one prayer more for that awful moment! Oh that this, and all we have ever offered with regard to it, may then *come in remembrance before God* !*

A Meditation and Prayer, suited to the Case of a dying Christian.

"O THOU supreme Ruler of the visible and invisible worlds! Thou Sovereign of life and of death; of earth and of heaven! Blessed be thy name, I have often been taught to seek thee. And now once more do I pour out my soul, my departing soul, unto thee. Bow down thy gracious ear, O God, and let my cry come before thee with acceptance!

"The hour is come, when thou wilt separate me from this world, with which I have been so long and so familiarly acquainted, and lead me to another, as yet unknown. Enable me, I beseech thee, to make the exchange, as becomes a child of Abraham, who *being called of thee to receive an inheritance, obeyed and went out, though he knew not particularly whither he went†;* as becomes a child of God, who knows, that through sovereign grace, *it is his Father's good pleasure to give him the kingdom‡!*

"I acknowledge, O Lord, the justice of that sentence by which I am expiring; and own thy wisdom and goodness, in appointing my journey through this gloomy vale which is now before me. Help me to turn it into the happy occasion of honouring thee, and adorning my profession! and I will bless the pangs, by which thou art glorified, and this mortal and sinful part of my nature is dissolved.

"Gracious Father, I would not quit this earth of thine, and this house of clay in which I have sojourned during my abode upon the face of it, without my grateful acknowledgments to thee for all that abundant *goodness which thou hast caused to pass before me here§*. With my dying breath, I bear witness to thy faithful care, I have *wanted no good thing‖*. I thank thee, O my God, that this guilty, forfeited, unprofitable life was so

* Acts x. 4, 31. † Heb. xi. 8. ‡ Luke xii. 32. § Exod. xxxiii. 19. ‖ Psal. xxxiv. 10.

long spared: that it hath still been maintained by such a rich variety of thy bounty. I thank thee, that thou hast made this beginning of my existence so pleasant to me. I thank thee, for the mercies of my days and nights, of my months and years, which are now come to their period: I thank thee, for the mercies of my infancy, and for those of my riper age; for all the agreeable friends which thou hast given me in this house of my pilgrimage, the living and the dead; for all the help I have received from others; and for all the opportunities which thou hast given me of being helpful to the bodies and souls of my brethren of mankind. *Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life**, and I have reason to rise a thankful guest from the various and pleasant entertainments with which my table has been furnished by thee. Nor shall I have reason to repine, or to grieve at quitting them: for, O my God, are thy bounties exhausted? I know that they are not. I will not wrong thy goodness and thy faithfulness so much as to imagine, that because I am going from this earth, I am going from happiness. I adore thy mercy that thou hast taught me to entertain nobler views through Jesus thy Son. I bless thee with all the powers of my nature, that I ever heard of his name, and heard of his death: and would fain exert a more vigorous act of thankful adoration, than in this broken state I am capable of, while I am extolling thee, for the riches of thy grace manifested in him; for his instructions and his example, for his blood and his righteousness, and for that blessed spirit of thine which thou hast given me, to turn my sinful heart unto thyself, and to bring me into the bonds of thy covenant; of that *covenant*, which is *ordered in all things and sure*†, and which this death, though now separating my soul from my body, shall never be able to dissolve.

"I bless thee, O Lord, that I am not dying in an unregenerate and impenitent state; but that thou didst graciously awaken and convince me; that thou didst renew and sanctify my heart, and didst by thy good Spirit work in it an unfeigned faith, a real repentance, and the beginning of a divine life. I thank thee for ministers and ordinances: I thank thee for my sabbaths, and my sacrament days; for the weekly and monthly refreshments which they gave me: I thank thee for the fruits of Canaan, which were sent me in the wilderness, and are now sent me on the brink of Jordan. I thank thee for thy blessed word, and for those exceeding rich and precious promises of it, which now lie as a cordial warm at my heart in this chilling

* Psal. xxiii. 6. † 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

hour; promises of support in death, and of glory beyond it, and of the resurrection of my body to everlasting life. O my God, I firmly believe them all, great and wonderful as they are, and am waiting for the accomplishment of them through Jesus Christ; *in whom they are all yea and Amen**. *Remember thy word unto thy servant, on which thou hast caused me to hope†!* I covenanted with thee not only for worldly enjoyments, which thy love taught me comparatively to despise; but for eternal life, as *the gift of thy free grace through Jesus Christ my Lord‡:* and now permit me in his name to enter my humble claim to it! Permit me to consign *this departing spirit to thine hand; for thou hast redeemed it, O Lord God of truth§! I am thine: save me‖*, and make me happy!

"But may I indeed presume to say, I am thine? O God, now I am standing on the borders of both worlds, now I view things, as in the light of thy presence and of eternity, how unworthy do I appear, that I should be taken to dwell with thy angels and saints in glory! Alas, I have reason to look back with deep humiliation on a poor unprofitable sinful life, in which I have daily been deserving to be cast into hell. But I have this one comfortable reflection, that I have fled to the cross of Christ; and I now renew my application to it. To think of appearing before God in such an imperfect righteousness as my own, were ten thousand times worse than death. No, Lord! I come unto thee as a sinner; but as a sinner who has believed in thy Son for pardon and life; I fall down before thee as a guilty polluted wretch; but thou hast made him to be unto thy people for *wisdom and righteousness, for sanctification and redemption¶*. Let me have my lot among the followers of Jesus! Treat me, as thou treatest those who are his friends and his brethren! For thou knowest, my soul has loved him, and trusted him, and solemnly ventured itself on the security of his gospel. And *I know in whom I have believed***. The infernal lion may attempt to dismay in the awful passage; but I rejoice that I am *in the hands of the good shepherd††;* and I defy all my spiritual enemies, in a cheerful dependance on his faithful care. I lift up my eyes and my heart to him, who *was dead and is alive again; and behold, he lives for evermore, and hath the keys of death and of the unseen world‡‡*. Blessed Jesus, I die by thine hand, and I fear no harm from the hand of a Saviour! I fear not that death,

* 2 Cor. i. 20. † Psal. cxix. 49. ‡ Rom. vi. 23. § Psal. xxxi. 5.
‖ Psal. cxix. 94. ¶ 1 Cor. i. 30. ** 2 Tim. i. 12. †† John. x. 11, 28.
‡‡ Rev. i. 18.

which is allotted to me by the hand of my dearest Lord, who himself died to make it safe and happy. I come, Lord, I come not only with a willing, but with a joyful consent. I thank thee, that thou rememberest me for good; that thou art breaking my chains, and calling me to *the glorious liberty of the children of God**. I thank thee, that thou wilt no longer permit me to live at a distance from thine arms; but, after this long absence, wilt have me at home, at home for ever.

"My feeble nature faints in the view of that glory which is now dawning upon me: but thou knowest how, gracious Lord, to let it in upon my soul by just degrees, and to *make thy strength perfect in my weakness*†. Once more, for the last time, would I look down on this poor world which I am going to quit, and breathe out my dying vows for its prosperity; and that of thy church in it. I have loved it, O Lord, as a living member of the body; and I love it to the last. I humbly beseech thee therefore that thou wilt guard it, and purify it, and unite it more and more! Send down more of thy blessed Spirit upon it, even the spirit of wisdom, of holiness, and of love; till in due time *the wilderness be turned into a garden of the Lord*‡, *and all flesh shall see thy salvation*§!

"And as for me, bear me, O my heavenly Father, on the wings of everlasting love, to that peaceful, that holy, that joyous abode, which thy mercy has prepared for me, and which the blood of my Redeemer hath purchased! Bear me *to the general assembly and church of the first-born, to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect*‖. And whatever this flesh may suffer, let my steady soul be delightfully fixed on that glory to which it is rising! Let faith perform its last office in an honourable manner! Let my few remaining moments on earth be spent for thy glory, and so let me ascend, with love in my heart, and praise on my faultering tongue, to the world where love and praise shall be complete! Be this my last song on earth, which I am going to tune in heaven; *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever*¶. Amen."

* Rom. viii. 21. † 2 Cor. xii. 9. ‡ Isai. li. 3.
§ Luke iii. 6. ‖ Heb. xii. 22, 23. ¶ Rev. v. 13.

AN

ANSWER

TO A LATE

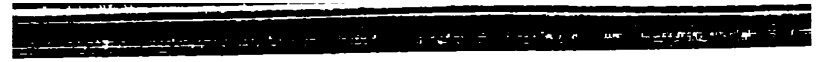
PAMPHLET,

INTITLED,

CHRISTIANITY NOT FOUNDED ON ARGUMENT, &c.

IN

THREE LETTERS TO THE AUTHOR.



TO THE

AUTHOR OF A LATE PAMPHLET,

INTITLED,

CHRISTIANITY NOT FOUNDED ON ARGUMENT, &c.

LETTER I.

SIR,

WHEN I consider the strain and purport of your late discourse, I am heartily sorry that I was so long a stranger to it. A month has hardly passed, since it first fell into my hands. They who know my circumstances in life, and the variety of business in which I am continually engaged, will not wonder that I missed it so long. Nor should I have read it now, had it not been mentioned to me by some friends, for whose judgment I have a very high regard, as a performance which had a very ill aspect on christianity, and which was executed with much more spirit and address, than is to be found in most of the attacks which have been lately made upon it.

I have now, Sir, perused it with attention; and various as my cares and labours are, I think it of such importance, that I ought to lay before you, and the world, the result of my reflections upon it.

The character you have assumed of a most zealous advocate for christianity, seems so ill to agree with the purport of your reasonings, that I apprehend most of our readers will esteem it a bad compliment paid to your understanding, if I were to think of that character otherwise than as a mask worn for pleasantry, rather than the design of your pamphlet, with which I am concerned. Were you indeed the warm christian you personate, I could not behold the wounds of religion with indifference, merely because they were received in the house of a friend: nor would I consent to demolish the walls of a fortress, on the strength of which my life, and even the safety of my country, depended,

though the worthiest man upon earth should, in a fit of lunacy, undertake to persuade me, that it was the most effectual method to engage the miraculous protection of an almighty arm, that those efforts, which, in the name of the Lord, you have thought fit to make, with such solemn preparation, and such glowing ardour of spirit, do indeed tend to subvert the faith of christians, and to expose the gospel to the last degree of contempt, is so exceeding plain, that I verily believe, it would appear to every intelligent reader a solemn kind of trifling, to labour the proof of it: and the passages, which I am to take under examination, may be more than sufficient to demonstrate it to a stranger.

You have evidently represented christianity, if not religion in general, as an unreasonable thing; for you expressly tell us, not only "that it is not founded on argument," and that it is incapable of being generally proved by it; but go so far as roundly to say, (p, 86.) "that there is an irreconcilable repugnance between reason and faith." You speak of scripture, as if all your eloquence was at a loss for words strong enough to express your contempt for it. "*Manuscript* authorities and *paper-revelations*," as they are insultingly called, are, it seems, "an empty notion:" (p. 60)—"The suspicious repositories of human testimony, in which nothing remains that can deserve our least notice, or be thought of consequence enough to engage a moment's attention." (p. 59.) It was not, it seems, enough to represent them as superfluous, "We have no longer need of distant records:" (ibid.) But you briskly maintain, that omnipotence itself is not able to supply their defects and insufficiency; "though a constant miracle were to interpose on the occasion, and the same almighty power that first indited it," whatever you mean by that singular expression, "were to continue hovering perpetually with a guardian hand over the sacred depositum." (p. 61.)

As for all the scripture miracles, on which we have laid so great a stress, you declare without reserve, "that they are to us no more than an uncertain hear-say," and "that the voice of God, bearing witness to his beloved Son, has long since dwindled to human tradition." (p. 52, 53.) Nay, you strongly insinuate, that these miracles were never meant as arguments of the divine authority of the gospel; (p. 46.) and, with very little complaisance to St. Paul, are pleased to tell us, by a burlesque on his words, when speaking of the resurrection of Christ, (p. 68.) "that *the thing was done in a corner*," without taking the least notice of the public proofs which were given of it, in the very place where it had happened but a few days before.

It is obvious, Sir, that I might transcribe many pages of your work in illustration of these hints; and I must needs say, that the language appears so unnatural, and so monstrous, in a professed disciple of Christ, that I am sometimes ready to wonder, you were not a little more careful to save appearances. But then I recollect, that the character you assume is such, as leaves little room to expect consistency, and seems best supported by such kind of paradoxes and self-contradictions. By this means also you have artfully enough disarmed your adversary of the weapon called *argumentum ad hominem*, a whole magazine of which might otherwise have presented. Were you to be attacked that way, you would no doubt laugh very heartily, to see an adversary so fairly bit, in a grave expectation that you should be solicitous *cum ratione insanire*, to appear a cool-headed, consistent enthusiast.

You have chosen, Sir, in these transports, whether real or fictitious, to fight with a too-edged weapon; and the blow which you give by a kind of back stroke, while avowedly defending christianity, seems to me as threatning as any of the rest. I mean, those passages of your book, in which you so grossly misrepresent that glorious and important doctrine of the New Testament, concerning the agency of the divine Spirit, in promoting the reception and efficacy of the gospel. This, according to you, is nothing less than such an immediate and instantaneous communication of the whole sum and system of the gospel, as renders every particular believer more infallible, than the church of Rome has generally asserted the Pope to be, and secures the most illiterate person, even from a possibility of error. (p. 89, 90.) This plenary inspiration communicated to every private christian, you represent as the main and only support of religion; though I think, Sir, you must needs know, that every difference of opinion in the christian church is a demonstration, that no such universal influences do in fact take place. So that upon the whole, you have left christianity no evidence but what every one sees it has not, that is indeed you have left it no evidence at all. In one word, if your reader were to suppose you serious in what you write, and to fall in with your reasoning, I think the plain consequence must be, that all men of sober sense would immediately reject the gospel, while among the remainder, every one that was mad would make himself a prophet, and vent every wild chimera of his distempered brain as an immediate dictate of God himself; in the plenitude of inspiration and distraction, equally scorning to condescend, to

assign any reasons for his doctrines, or to hear any arguments against them.

That your late performance, sprightly and ingenious as it is, has a tendency to produce these terrible effects, (for to me they appear terrible beyond expression,) is too evident; and I may afterwards give you a more particular account of the reasons, on which I apprehend, that it must in its consequences affect the foundations of natural religion, as well as of revealed. How far any of these consequences might be intended by you, it is not my business to determine. You, Sir, are ere long to answer that to the great Judge of hearts, whose tribunal I should dread to usurp. Yet I cannot forbear observing, that the ludicrous turn you so often give to scripture, and the air of burlesque and irony which runs through your whole piece, neither suits the character of a rapturous devotee so often affected, nor discovers a becoming sense of the infinite moment of the question in debate. Pardon me, Sir, the plainness with which I speak my real apprehensions on this head, and believe me when I seriously declare, it is with no design to libel and expose you, but with a sincere desire to serve you and others, into whose hand this letter may come, that I now set myself to examine what you have advanced, and, if possible, to lead you into juster and safer sentiments.

Agreeably to these views, and that regard to the general good which has engaged me to enter on this controversy, I shall decline the invidious and unnecessary task of pursuing you, with severe criticism, through every paragraph. I am not solicitous to expose every unguarded expression, to canvas every minute mistake, nor even rescue every clause of the sacred writings which I apprehend you have misrepresented or misapplied. I have not leisure for such a task as this, and there is hardly any thing against which my temper more strongly recoils. I shall examine what I apprehend most material, and most dangerous in your work, with calmness and seriousness; representing, in as few words as I can, what I take to be the strength of your cause, and telling you with the simplicity and moderation that becomes a christian, how I answer it to my own conscience. This I shall do with all possible plainness, not affecting to be witty in a case in which eternity is concerned; nor so consulting your taste and character, as to forget that I am addressing the public, and aiming not to divert, but if possible, to edify. And if any cannot relish such a design, and such a manner, I give them fair warning to throw this

letter aside, and to waste, (or shall I rather say, to kill,) no more of their precious moments about it.

It sufficiently appears, Sir, from your manner of writing, that you are well aware, the main strength of your cause lies in the first head of your discourse, to which therefore, after some gay flourishes on the two last, you return again toward the conclusion of your pamphlet. It is this therefore, which I shall here examine at large; and the rather, because I think what you urge on this topic, though it be far from any new discovery, may admit some farther illustration, than I have commonly met with; and is the point, which in proportion to its difficulty and importance, has been least discussed by the worthy apologists for christianity, in which our country is so happy. The foundations of the solution have indeed often been laid down; but I have long wished to see the matter placed in that particular point of view, in which the difficulties you propose, and which naturally arise, may be most happily obviated.

It is your professed design under your first general to shew, "That reason, or the intellectual faculty, could not possibly, both from its own nature, and that of religion, be the principle intended by God to lead us into a true faith." (p. 7.) An ambiguous proposition, the sense of which must be ascertained in a few words, before its pretended demonstration can be discussed.

You well know, Sir, that the whole body of christians as such, are, and must ever be agreed, that reason is not our only guide, but that divine Revelation is most wisely and graciously intended to supply its many deficiencies; and you know too, that they generally acknowledge the reality and importance of divine influences on the mind, to confirm our faith, and to quicken our obedience. So that if you would not encounter a puppet of your own forming, with whom we have no manner of concern, you must mean by this grand proposition, "That reason is not to be consulted, in judging either of the evidences or the sense of any supposed revelation, nor in forming any of our religious sentiments." An assertion so apparently extravagant, that one would imagine, that merely to propound it were a sufficient confutation.

Can any one indeed seriously think, that the noblest of our powers was intended only to the lowest and meanest purposes; to serve the little offices of mortal life, and not to be consulted in the greatest of concerns, those of immortality? Strange! that the only power which renders us capable of saying, *Where*

is God my Maker? and of forming any sentiments of religion at all, should be discharged from that province, for which it seems chiefly to have been given! But it will at least have strength and spirit enough to say, Why must I be thus discharged? And you condescend to answer at large, without seeming to be aware, that your first step towards demonstrating your point supposes it to be false; appealing to reason itself to judge, that it is not capable of judging at all. Nor is this position only inconsistent with the pertinency of any reasoning whatsoever, but particularly inconsistent with that footing on which you profess to place christianity, when its rational proofs are given up. Since, if God were, according to your strange hypothesis, to reveal to me in a moment the whole system of christianity, and were I assured, by some inward inexplicable sensation, that it was indeed a revelation from him, I could not receive it without some reasoning. I must at least have this one short syllogism in my mind, "What comes from God is to be admitted as true; but this comes from God, therefore it is to be so admitted." And the foundation of this supposes some previous reasoning, concerning the existence, and veracity of that being, whose testimony is so readily to be admitted.

A very small part of your sagacity, Sir, might serve to discover this, which, obvious as it is, supersedes all you have written. I will therefore take it for granted, that what you really intend by this general, and very unguarded proposition, is chiefly this; "That christianity is not capable of such a rational proof, as can be made intelligible to the generality of mankind, so as to oblige them to receive and obey it." This is what you seem to have at heart throughout your whole book, and I shall not farther press the advantage you have given an opponent, by asserting so much more than was necessary to your main design.

You do indeed sometimes acknowledge, I think in direct opposition to your main argument, that christianity is capable of being rationally proved to the conviction of a studious person; (however unnecessary, and however hazardous it may be, even for such a one to meddle with that kind of proof: But you always contend, that the generality of mankind cannot enter into any rational proofs of it, (though it is well known that it was intended for them;) and that they who can, will not find them sufficient, to bear the stress which must in fact be laid upon them, if we desire to be christians to any valuable purpose. I shall therefore set myself on the contrary to prove, "That the rational evidence of christianity is so adjusted, that

the generality of its professors may, if they be not wanting to themselves, attain to some competent satisfaction with regard to it." And when I have offered that proof, I shall consider your objections.

I am far from asserting, that every one in common life can have a full view of all the controversies which relate to christianity; a curiosity of literature, which to multitudes would be of very small importance: nor do I maintain, that every sincere believer is capable of rendering a sufficient reason for his faith; an ability on many accounts highly desirable, yet not, so far as I can find, at all essential to salvation. A man may have reason in his own mind, which he cannot readily put into words. Nay, I apprehend it possible, that a man may feel and comply with the practical tendency of christianity, who does not himself rightly apprehend the force of its rational proofs, and perhaps lays a very great stress on arguments which are far from being conclusive. And I hope, Sir, you will allow, that when a man's temper and character is such as the gospel requires, such a speculative mistake as to the strength of an argument does not affect his salvation. Else I fear, we must condemn all those excellent persons, who have believed the great fundamental of all religion, the existence of a God, chiefly on the force of those Cartesian arguments, now generally, and I think rationally, exploded.

The question is not, what knowledge is universally necessary, nor what is in fact attained; but what satisfaction might generally be had, if there were a competent care, on the one hand, to teach, and on the other, to learn. This is all, which is absolutely essential to my argument. Nevertheless, for the farther illustration of the subject, I shall freely tell you, how I apprehend the case to stand, with regard to the generality of the common people, who are in good earnest in the profession of religion; readily acknowledging, though with great grief, that there are thousands and ten thousands, who wear the name of christians as by mere accident, without at all considering its meaning, reason, or obligation; a case very consistent with the possibility of their being better informed, and rationally convinced.

Now, here, Sir, the leading thought will be, that God has so adjusted the nature and circumstances of christianity, as represented and exhibited in the New Testament, that it is attended with a strong degree of internal evidence, of which, by an unaccountable omission, you take not the least notice; and that what is most essential to the external proof, lies within much

less compass than you seem to imagine, and is capable, if previous precautions be taken in a proper manner, of being opened to persons of an ordinary capacity, and understood by them, though they have neither ability nor leisure for the curiosities of learned disquisition.

For the illustration of this, you must give me leave to remind you, that both the Mosaic and Christian dispensations have been much misrepresented, in consequence of mens taking their notions of them, rather from the conduct of their professors, than from the institutes of their respective founders. To apply this to the present occasion, let us consider what the case of christians would be, with regard to the rational evidence of their religion, if things were to flow on in the channel, into which it was the apparent design of our Divine Master to direct them.

You will, no doubt, Sir, readily allow, that a pious education, and a standing ministry, are appointments of our blessed Redeemer, and will spare me the trouble of proving either of them in form. And as you take it for granted in the whole of your letter, that infant baptism is a christian ordinance, you will also allow me to mention it as a common principle, though little of my argument will depend upon its being so.

A parent therefore, acting upon the laws of christianity, (which is what I here all along suppose in stating the case,) having in a solemn manner devoted his child to God in its early infancy, and having ever since been affectionately recommending it to the divine blessing, watches the first dawning of reason, to instill into its tender mind, sentiments of piety to God, gratitude to the Redeemer, benevolence to men, and every other grace and virtue which the gospel recommends, and which the life of its great founder exemplified. Quickened by the obligation, which the birth and baptism of every younger child in the family renews, the father and mother concur in a wise and conscientious care, to keep their dear offspring, as far as possible, out of the sight and hearing of every thing profane, cruel and indecent; and *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable, whatsoever things are righteous, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise,* the child will be taught, by the force of precept and daily example, to think on these things, and to pursue them. The consequence of this, under those influences of divine grace which may be cheerfully expected in the way of duty, will probably be an early sense of decency, virtue, and piety. The growth of those seeds of corrupt nature, which will in some instances discover themselves in the

most amiable children, will in a great measure be suppressed; religion will grow familiar and pleasant, under the smiling aspect it will appear to wear; and the bible, which our little disciple will early have been taught to read, will soon become a most delightful book. The entertaining stories, the fine examples, the beautiful poems, the wise precepts so gravely and yet so kindly given, which it will every where meet with, must give it abundance of pleasure; and it will be eager to read those things, the general contents of which it has learnt, long before it could read, from the daily discourse of its parents, who while they are recounting these glorious things, will be teaching themselves as well as their children, and by more familiar and attentive views of them, confirming their own faith, and animating their own piety. And as for the leading facts which the child meets with in scripture, strange as some of them may appear, it will readily believe them, on this general foundation; that its good parents who know much better than himself, and never deceive him, assure him that every thing, which this excellent book contains, is true. And this, Sir, is all the satisfaction, which a child of the most extraordinary genius can have in the first stages of life; and if it die before it arrive to greater maturity, it will be happy in the practical influence, which the gospel, thus implicitly believed, had upon its temper and conduct; as it could be under no necessity of entering into its rational evidence, before those faculties opened by which that evidence was to be received, any more than a blind man can be obliged to read, or the dumb to sing God's praises.

At length, as the minds of children open, they will gradually be led into some farther reflections on the *certainty of those things in which they have been instructed.* And here they will soon perceive some degree of difference in the evidence of them, immediately appearing. As for the *existence of a Supreme Being*, I really think, that the noblest and most satisfactory arguments, of which the mind of man is capable, are those which are obvious even to the understanding of a child; I mean, those taken from the works of creation and providence. Common sense will surely tell these little creatures, as soon as they can understand the words, that if every house, even the poorest cottage, must have some builder, there must be one *who built all things;* who made heaven and earth, with all their bright, noble furniture. And as they see, clearly as they see the sun, that he who made, and upholds all these things, is powerful and wise; which every flower, and every fly, when considered as his work, may shew them: so they may naturally conclude,

such a great and wise Being is good; and it will be easy to shew them, that every agreeable object about them is a sensible proof of his goodness; every pleasant fruit, for instance, a gift of God, which all the men in the world could not have made, or provided for them, without him.

By such familiar views of things they may be brought, not only to believe, but to know, that there is a *great, powerful, wise*, and *kind Father of the world* always near them. Nor will it be difficult to give them some rational view and conviction of his moral attributes, as inferred from his natural. I suppose they have in those early lessons of sacred history, which have been their entertainment from their infancy, been led to reflect on the characters of persons mentioned; to see the amiableness of some affections and actions, and the deformity of others, which in many instances are as obvious, as that one face, or dress, makes a pleasanter appearance to the eye than another. Discerning this visible difference in moral characters, long before they know what the words morality or character signify, they will naturally, and I think very reasonably conclude, that it is just to ascribe every excellence and glory to him, in whom they see so many: and by consequence, that he must be pleased with what is good, and displeased with what is evil. They see it in their wise and pious parents, (for wise and pious we here suppose them to be;) and they will much more conclude, it must be in him, whom they have learnt to address as *our Father who is in heaven*. I take the liberty, Sir, to tell you, that I have examined many scores of children on these heads, not as to what they have learnt, but what they themselves think of the matter; and have put the questions in various forms, to suggest an affirmative or negative answer; and I always find, if they understand the terms of it, they answer right upon a very short pause.

Agreeably to those obvious principles, they naturally apprehend, that the regard of God to his creatures follows them beyond death; and that he rewards, or punishes them, suitably to their temper and behaviour. They cannot think, that God would have suffered such persons, as Abel, or the seven sons of that good woman in the Maccabees, to have been slain in that cruel manner, if he had not intended to take them to himself, and make them happier than they were: that, Sir, is a learned prejudice, the laboured error of a man, of a minute philosopher; the simplicity of a virtuous child is not able to attain it.

A prudent parent will easily foresee, that the child will

find greater difficulties in coming at the evidence of the truth of those things, which depend merely upon the authority of scripture: he will therefore early be laying in materials for its seeing the force of that noble part of it, which you so strangely leave untouched; I mean, that which is internal, and arises from the contents and design of the book itself. A child trained up as we here suppose, will, probably, of itself make a great many reflections, what an excellent book it is; especially as to some parts of it, with which I have known little children so struck, that they have, of their own accord, read the same passage, though neither history nor parable, over and over, till they have almost learned it by heart: the religious parent or friend will watch, encourage, and illustrate these remarks; and at length, when he finds the young mind strong enough to receive it, he will lead it to reflect, what excellent men they must be who wrote such things: and when that reflection is familiar, and has been daily renewed, perhaps for weeks and months, another easily follows, that the bible is undoubtedly true and divine; for good men would never have invented lies, and have presumed to teach them in the name of God himself; and wicked men would not, and could not, have written what is so excellently good, and tends to make others so. This Sir, my pious friends taught me when I was a child; and I think it, to this very day, an argument of unanswerable weight, and I cannot but apprehend, that the more a man advances in real goodness, and the more intimately he converses with scripture, the more he will be impressed with it. Here is an argument depending on no other fact than this, that there is such a book as the bible in the world, of which our children are as sure, as that there is a sun: and providence has wisely ordered it so, that they may understand the force of it, before they can enter into objections against it; and so far as I can judge, those objections must be stronger than any I have ever met with, which can be sufficient to balance the force of it. Yet this is far from being the only foundation of our faith, or the only argument in its favour, which a young christian may be able, with proper assistance, to understand.

The external evidence does not indeed lie within so little room, nor can it perhaps be made equally obvious by every pious parent; yet, with the assistance which able ministers, and proper books, may give, I apprehend, a child of fourteen or fifteen years old may have some competent view of it. It will be a most easy thing to shew him, by uncontroverted testimonies, collected by a variety of writers,—that christianity

was an ancient religion,—for the sake of which its professors, in its earliest ages, endured great extremities;—that there was about 1700 years ago, such a person as Jesus Christ, the great founder of it;—that the first preachers of his religion wrote books, which were called by the name of those that make up the most important part of the New Testament;—that these books are, in the main, transmitted to us uncorrupted;—and that our translation of them may, in the general, be depended upon as right. These are the grand preliminaries; and as the foundation may be laid without much difficulty, so the superstructure may be raised upon it, with yet much more ease. From the New Testament, thus proved to be genuine, a person of very moderate capacity and learning will presently be able to shew, that the writers of it certainly knew whether the facts they recorded were true or false;—that their character, so far as we can judge by their manner of writing, was so excellently good, that there is no reason to suspect them of falsehood;—nay, that the probability of their fidelity is so great, that it would be astonishing, if the strongest temptation could prevail upon them to violate it;—at least in so criminal a manner, as they must have done if they were impostors:—the temptations must have been exceeding strong, to justify the least degree of suspicion:—but they had no temptation at all to forge such a story, and to attempt to impose upon the world by it:—however, that if they had made the attempt they could not have succeeded in gaining credit;—nevertheless, it is plain, they did gain credit among vast multitudes, who were strongly prejudiced against the religion they taught:—from all which things compared, it appears, that their story, and the religion founded upon it, i. e. christianity, is true; a conclusion which may be greatly illustrated by shewing them farther,—what wonderful things have since happened for the confirmation of it; considering, on the one hand, what God has done to establish it; and, on the other, what methods its enemies have taken to destroy it.

It is not my business, Sir, to state and vindicate these arguments at large; I have done it already in my three Sermons on the Evidences of Christianity, which were published several years ago; and I shall be very ready to canvas the strength of them, as there represented, with any who shall think fit to bring them into dispute. I the rather mention those sermons here, because they are calculated for popular use, and may assist those who are not so well versed in the arguments, to propose them to their children, or catechumens, in what I apprehend the

easiest and plainest light. By talking over these heads in a free and familiar manner, and then giving the young person the book to read two or three times alone, till he has fixed the leading thoughts in his understanding and memory, I doubt not but such a foundation might be laid in a few days, as all the succeeding years of life would not be able to shake. Nor must it ever be forgotten, how much it would be cemented and established, by that true taste of moral beauty and excellence, which we suppose already formed in the mind of our young student. He would find so much to charm him in the sentiments, character, and conduct of the apostles, as would engage him to lay a very great stress on that important branch of the argument which turns on that point. It would appear to him, in theory, utterly improbable, that men of their heroic goodness should engage in so impious, and mischievous a fraud, as they must have engaged in, if their testimony was false; as*, on the other hand, the good sense which may easily be discovered in their writings and behaviour, will make it appear equally absurd to imagine, they should so madly run on sufferings and ruin, as they must have done, if they had not been conscious of a divine support, of miraculous powers, and of immense future rewards.

A religious youth, grown up to years of maturity, with a mind thus furnished, and thus disposed, will not easily be perverted to infidelity: so precious a freight would be too weighty, to be overset by every wind of doctrine, or every breath of ridicule. Yet it might conduce farther to its security, if a prudent parent or minister should give him, before the scene of temptation opens, some short hints of the chief topics from whence objections against christianity are drawn, and of the plainest and most obvious answers to them, which, so far as I can judge, are generally the most solid. If a person be not intended for some learned profession, or distinguished circumstance in life, it is by no means necessary to be large in this part of the scheme; but something of this kind may easily and profitably be done, and there will be no reason to be in any panic, lest every hint of an objection should overturn his faith. Answers will be suggested, with those objections; and he will soon be weary of hearing such poor unsatisfactory things as most of the cavils of infidelity are. And here, again, the good habits, and

* How impious and mischievous the fraud must have been, if it were a fraud, is illustrated more fully than I have elsewhere seen it, in the sermons I mentioned above; (see p. 259, and seq. 2d edit.) and the thought appears to me of vast importance.

dispositions formed in his mind, will be of great service. He will perceive, that christianity wears so favourable an aspect, and opens upon him so fine a prospect, that he will not hunt after objections against it; as a man is not studious to find a flaw in writings, by which he stands intitled to the reversion of some noble estate: and when they accidentally start up in his way, he will soon see, that many of them are grounded on notorious falsehood, and are in themselves despicably mean; especially when set against the great arguments for it, of which he is already possessed: and with regard to others, the assistance of ministers and other religious friends, which when pressed with real difficulties he will honestly seek, will, no doubt, furnish him with proper answers; and, indeed, his converse with the scriptures will enable him, without foreign assistance, to obviate most of them, and they will vanish like birds of night before the rising sun: not now to mention these auxiliaries, which his faith will often call in, from observing and comparing the different characters of those, who are most solicitous, on the one hand to destroy it, and on the other to support it, of which I may hereafter speak.

If this, Sir, were merely an imaginary scheme, on which no parent acted, and no children were educated, yet if it were, (as, I think, every one must own it is,) agreeable to the original christian plan, it would not be foreign to our purpose; as it will prove, that if proper precautions were taken, and men were to act in character, competent rational evidence might be attained, as young people grew up to a capacity of exercising reason; which is all that could be supposed requisite. But bad as the world is, I bless God, I can confidently say, I have in the main traces copied from the life. This, to my certain knowledge, is the care of many parents and ministers, and this the felicity of many children. The success is generally answerable; and I hope, the instances in which it is so in the protestant world, are not to be numbered by scores, but by hundreds and thousands, who are to be regarded as the precious seed of the church in the next age, and who I doubt not will, in spite of all the efforts of infidelity, exert themselves so effectually in its service, that the *gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Nevertheless, while I bless God, that this is the case of so many, I very readily acknowledge, that, through a negligence, for which I fear a multitude of parents and ministers have a terrible account to render before God, it is generally much otherwise. By far the greater part of professing christians have probably no better reason to give for their religion, than that

they were early baptized into it, and have been trained up in some of its external forms. Far from being instructed in its evidences, they are hardly taught its doctrines, or its precepts; or superficially learn them from those, who do not themselves seem to be in good earnest concerned about the one or the other. The fatal consequence is too plain. The corruptions of nature, abetted by the force of evil examples, prevail against them; and they are early plunged into such licentious practices, that if they ever reflect on the most evident and express declarations of the word of God, they must immediately see, that they are condemned by it.

Now there is no reason to wonder, if many of this sort of christians are easy proselytes to infidelity. It is no surprising thing, if a bold jest thrown upon scripture, or a confident senseless assertion of its falsehood, (perhaps from a person, on whose word hardly any thing else would be believed,) have with them all the weight of a demonstration. They will be little concerned to ask information, or consider how objections may be answered. Those magical words, priest-craft, and the prejudice of education, stun and terrify them: they submit, as you gravely express it, (p. 75.) "in the impotence and impuberty of a dutiful understanding, in the tractable simplicity of unpractised reason: with the obsequious and humble acquiescence of a babe, they sit down to learn their lesson" too; and their unbelief, after they have attained the stature of men, is just as blind and implicit, as the faith of their childhood was.

This, Sir, is undoubtedly the case with many; and you cannot but have observed, what large companies in the free-thinking army are raised and enlisted from among these vagabonds. But the generality of men among us, as in every nation, go on thoughtlessly in the religion in which they were educated: hearing the truth of it often asserted, and perhaps never hearing it contradicted, they entertain no doubts on the subject, but grow old in a mere speculative and ineffectual assent to christianity. And if their heart at any time smite them, with the contrariety of their temper and conduct to the rules which they acknowledge to be divine, they seek their shelter in the hope of making their peace with God, (as they commonly express it,) before they go out of the world; and perhaps abuse some of the noblest discoveries which the gospel makes, as an encouragement to continue in those sins and follies, from which it was expressly designed to reclaim them.

Nevertheless, it frequently happens among such as these,

that some are awakened to think deeply and seriously of religion: the plain lively preaching of the gospel, or perhaps some afflictive providence, rouzes them from their lethargy. And I must reckon it among the chief felicities of my life, that I have had many opportunities of observing, what are in fact the workings of men's spirits in such a circumstance.

And here I have always found, that the moral perfections of the great Governor of the world appear to them in a very lively view: the records of their own consciences are thrown open before their eyes, and they feel a load of guilt pressing on their minds, of which they were before utterly insensible. Under this anxiety, they hear of the remedy which the gospel has provided; and they hear of it with another kind of regard than formerly. It is what they now perceive, that they want; (strange, that they should have perceived it no sooner!) and it appears far more important to them, than animal life and all its enjoyments. Hearing of the love and grace of a Redeemer, concerning the reality of whose undertaking they never had any considerable doubt, their hearts are transported with a flow of most ardent and various affections; they find another kind of energy in these things, than they were ever aware, or could have imagined to be possible. He has saved their lives at the expence of his own; and under the constraints of his love they consecrate themselves to a forgiving God, with an ardour of soul which nothing but gratitude can inspire. They do now, as it were, receive the gospel anew from his hand, not as a revelation now made, but now first endeared to them, by a sense of their own concern in it; they exemplify the beauty of its precepts, and they feel the force of its consolations. A blessed effect, in which I humbly acknowledge the finger of God, and the agency of his Spirit; though I see no reason to pretend to an immediate inspiration, in the sense which you maintain.

When the first tumult of affections, raised by so interesting and important a scene, subsides, and the happy converts come more coolly to reflect on what has passed, they draw a new argument of the truth of this glorious gospel from its experienced efficacy; and, though they cannot make a stranger sensible of the force of it, will say like the blind man, as yet little instructed in many other proofs of our Lord's divine mission, *If he were not of God, he could not have opened my eyes*; and under the lively impression of it, the sophistry of modern infidels is as little to them, as that of the Sanhedrim was to him. At length, growing in wisdom and piety by their

acquaintance with the gospel, and in proportion to their regard for it, they likewise, who had formerly no taste and sensibility for such things, become qualified to take a more extensive survey of its internal evidence, and to judge of it; and accordingly, they see it much in the same light with those who had been formed to an earlier subjection to it, and had grown up with it in their hands and their hearts.

Of these recovered votaries to it, some who have a head turned for reasoning, perhaps from a desire to serve others, and honour God, by defending christianity, rather than from any doubt which they themselves have of its truth, set themselves to study the evidences of the gospel, as stated in some judicious treatise on the subject; which they carefully examine, and often ground so thoroughly in their understanding and memories, as to be able to silence, if not to convince gainsayers. And others, who have not leisure or inclination to search so particularly into the whole compass of the argument, are perhaps greatly confirmed in their faith, by some circumstances which powerfully impress them, though they may not be able to communicate the force of the argument to others; or though, where it is communicated, it cannot publicly be stated, without inconveniences which might overbalance the advantages arising from the discovery of such occurrences.

I am sensible, Sir, I am touching on a subject which it is difficult to handle, without the imputation of enthusiasm, and perhaps without the danger of it; and therefore I shall dismiss it in a few words. I take upon me now to assert no facts, either as my own experience, or as on the testimony of others, whom I may have reason to credit; but I would suggest the thought in hypothesis. Is it in the nature of things impossible, or is it utterly incredible, that the great Author and Governor of all should, in some rare instances, even in these later ages, deviate from the laws by which he statedly rules the natural world, for the deliverance and support of some of his faithful servants in circumstances of great extremity; especially, when thereby the interest of the moral world may remarkably be promoted? Or supposing this to be ever so rare, I would further ask, Is it impossible, that he may, on a perfect view of every minute circumstance, have constituted the course of things in such a manner, that there shall be a remarkable correspondence between a train of thoughts in a christian's mind, and an event arising from other natural, but perhaps unobserved causes, on which that train of thoughts could have no influence? Do you, Sir, thoroughly understand

the law, by which thoughts arise in our mind? or can you say, by what connection one springs up, rather than another? Can you account for it, why the mind is sometimes so much more forcibly struck, than at other times, with the same object; or why it sometimes feels itself directed strongly into a certain channel, and track of thinking, in which it is not conscious to itself of a self-determining agency? Or are you sure that there may not be a special gracious appointment (whether natural or miraculous, I do not now contend,) in certain events, the causes of which are so unobserved, that we commonly, but perhaps rashly, say, they happen by chance? That the minds of many eminently wise and good men have been greatly comforted and established by such events, I am well assured, and it seems probable to me, that to well-disposed persons, of weaker abilities, they may more frequently happen: nevertheless, as I know they are liable to a great deal of cavil, and that it is the fashion of the age to deride every thing of this nature, I will not urge this argument in the present debate, but content myself with having insinuated it. I think, I ought not entirely to have omitted it; and this seems its most proper place.

It is, I hope, at least possible, that the faith of an illiterate christian may be not only really, but rationally confirmed by such events; or, if you will admit the commonly received phrase, by such special providences as these. However, I am sure, there is another topic of argument, which is frequently of great and important service in this view, and which falls under the daily observation of the common people as well as others, and of which they are as competent judges as the most polite and learned of mankind. I mean that which arises from comparing the temper and conduct of those who profess to reject the gospel, with that of those who seem most cordially to esteem and embrace it.

If it were evident and notorious, that infidelity did generally in fact make men better; if it increased their reverence for the divine Being, and made them more diligent, constant, and devout in paying their daily homage before him; if it rendered them more sober and temperate, more mild and gentle, more upright and benevolent in their behaviour; though this would be a most unaccountable phænomenon to any one who examines the constitution of the gospel, (since that diminishes no natural motive to virtue, and adds many peculiar to itself,) I do not say, that this remark ought to balance all the evidence, on the other side; yet I will venture, Sir, to say, that I think it would shock an honest and candid mind, more than all the

objections I have ever seen or heard of, as advanced by our modern free-thinkers. But I firmly believe, that what weight this thought has, will be found in favour of christianity, and not in opposition to it.

You well know, Sir, one can judge of these things only by one's own observation, and the report of others. I will not now insist on the latter; and that what I have to say as to the former, may not be imputed to the eagerness of disputation, I think it not unbecoming my character to use the solemnity of saying, in the words of St. Paul, *I protest to you by our rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus*, (and a stronger asseveration I cannot use,) that I write on this topic, as I would do if my life were to conclude with this letter, and I were directly to pass to account before the Judge of hearts, for the truth of what I say.

I condescend not to speak of a mere freedom from gross and infamous vices; but sure I am, that if I have ever seen amiable and sublime virtue in the world, I have seen it among the humble disciples of Jesus. Where education and circumstances in life have been low, christian principles have, to my certain knowledge, so far as principles could be known from behaviour, raised, animated, and ennobled the mind. I have beheld, even in cottages, that filial devotion toward the blessed God, that cordial submission to his will under the most painful dispensations, that calm steady fortitude, in the midst of evils which might have made a philosopher tremble, that cheerfulness in the immediate views of death; and, in the tenor of lives which I have intimately known, that strict integrity, that diligence, that contentment, that readiness to do good in full proportion to their small abilities, that generous self-denial to avoid what might grieve and offend others, and, to crown all, that tender solicitude for the eternal happiness of friends, of strangers, and sometimes of enemies; which has often filled me with wonder, as well as delight. I speak freely, as conscious both of the truth and importance of what I say; nor am I at all ashamed thus openly to acknowledge, that my faith in christianity has been not a little established by such observations as these; which, I bless God, have not been made in a few instances: and I esteem the evidence, not the less, but the more, because day-labourers might enter into it, as well as myself.

I doubt not, Sir, but thousands more have also made observations of this kind; and that it will generally be found, that when the principles of christianity enter a mind before unaffected with them, they produce this effect, which indeed it is most natural they should. On the other hand, as to professed

infidels, and it is on them only that the observation can pertinently be made, I appeal to the world in general, whether they do not commonly make shipwreck of a good conscience, as well as of faith, and plainly shew, that the precepts of the gospel are as disagreeable to them as its doctrines. It would be strange indeed, if good-nature, a sense of honour, and, especially in advanced life, a caution not to disgrace distinguishing principles, did not restrain some from scandalous enormities, and produce something agreeable in their behaviour; But I believe, most who know the world will allow, that it is a peculiar glory for any of this sect to maintain so much as an uniform external appearance of what the best heathen moralists have esteemed virtue.

People of attention and reflection in the lower ranks of life, are not so stupid, as not to observe these things, or to neglect drawing the obvious inference from them: an inference, in which they will be both directed, and supported, by that maxim of our divine master, *By their fruits ye shall know them.* What the morals of infidel writers in private life have been, it may seem difficult certainly to judge, because their pieces have been mostly anonymous. Yet I cannot forbear observing, that some of those ingenious authors have found out a way of letting the world into their characters, without publishing their names; and that in some such palpable instances, as one would almost ascribe to a judicial infatuation, or think they had been hired to expose their own cause to contempt.

And this leads me farther to touch upon that confirmation, which the faith of plain christians sometimes receives, from observing not only the character of those who would subvert christianity, but also the manner in which they often manage their opposition to it.

Every one who can read his bible may observe, (and it may be profitable for young persons especially, to be shewn it,) how unjustly the enemies of revelation often represent the doctrines and facts delivered in scripture. He may see the calumnies, which these men often throw upon the inspired writers, or those whom they celebrate, rolling off, like foul water from the down of a swan, without leaving any trace or soil behind it. It is obvious also to remark, that instead of examining, or so much as attempting to confute, the arguments for christianity, which these gentlemen cannot but know; they only advance their surmises, and their possibilities, or make vain efforts to prove, that those things cannot in reason be, which in fact appear.

It is not to be wondered, if honest persons of plain sense

have soon enough of such teachers, and do not often come to seek for *grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles;* or that if the boisterous attacks, which are made on their faith by such methods, seem at first a little to loosen the roots of it, the storm afterwards serves only to fix it the faster, and to make way for its farther spread. Especially when they see, that arguments produced in opposition to christianity often have as malignant an aspect on natural religion too, and apparently tend to destroy all mutual commerce among mankind, which can never be carried on without some confidence in the testimony of each other. It is thus that *meat* often *comes out of the eater*, and *sweetness out of the fierce;* and the *subtile* are *taken in their own craftiness.* The grossness of such visible and palpable snares engages prudent people to avoid the path in which they lie, and so secures them from others of a finer contexture, and a more dangerous form.

And thus, Sir, I have fulfilled my promise, and given you a more distinct account, than I remember to have met with elsewhere, of the rational satisfaction which many christians in common life have, and others, under due cultivation, might without any accuracy of learning obtain, with regard to the truth of the religion they profess. And I do sincerely apprehend, that this representation of the matter, far different from that which you have given, if it appear just, will contain a compendious answer to what you have suggested on the contrary side of the question; and be such a reply to your treatise, as walking is to the celebrated arguments which have been brought to demonstrate the impossibility of motion.

But here, Sir, as you tell your friend, "I am very sensible, I have been holding you for some time past in the highest impatience of zeal, to interpose and remind me," that even this evidence cannot be obtained by all;—that while it is pursued, it keeps the mind in a state of dangerous hesitation;—and where it is had, it is founded in the prepossessions of education,—in partial and imperfect views of the question;—that much of it depends upon precarious human testimony;—and consequently, that it cannot have efficacy enough to satisfy the mind, to controul irregular affections, or to animate against those extremities, which the gospel may sometimes require us to endure in its defence. Each of these particulars you object in your pamphlet; and I do not remember any thing material suggested in it, and proper to be considered in this place, which does not fall under one or another of these heads.

Now as to the first of these, it is indeed true, that all the evidence which I have here described, cannot probably be attained by all; though I am confident a great deal more might be done for this purpose, in an enlightened and protestant country like ours, than we generally see. Care might be taken, especially if the richer kind of people had a becoming compassion on their poor neighbours, to teach all children to read, and to furnish all families with bibles; as also to put such catechisms into their hands, as contain some hints of the reasons of christianity. And if that which Dr. Thomas Burnet has drawn up in so plain and concise a manner, were to be used, I will venture to say, that children will be furnished with reasons for being christians, which, so far as I can learn, the most sagacious deists have been too wise to attempt directly to answer; and till they both attempt, and effect it, the understanding of a child may see, that whatever else they do is of very little importance. There are also several other plain and popular pieces*, which may, with a very small expence of money and time, be purchased and perused by young people: and if they were to be read two or three times over in families on the evening of a Lord's-day, children and servants might, by an attentive hearing, be enabled to give some reason of the hope that is in them. And till they come to be capable of understanding such plain things as these, if they have no reason to believe their bible to be true, but that they find it excellently good, and see it believed and reverenced by the wisest and best of those around them, it is, I suppose, at least, as good a ground for their faith, as such infant understandings can have for infidelity. Nor will it be easy to invent any scheme, by which a child shall attain any knowledge at all, without some confidence in the veracity and skill of its parents, or other teachers.

Indeed, Sir, according to the injurious representation you have made of human nature, this is the case, not of little children alone, but of most who are grown up to years of maturity. "The generality of apprehensions," say you (page 17.) "extend not beyond a simple proposition, and are thrown out at once at the very mention of introducing a medium;" that is, in plain terms, they are not rational creatures. I shall not now urge, how inconsistent this is with the arguments, by which

* Either the Three Sermons mentioned above, page 20, or the bishop of London's Pastoral Letters; or a pamphlet intitled Plain Reasons for being a Christian; or the first part of The Gentleman's Religion.

those that call themselves (by a strong catachresis) freethinkers, attempt to reason people out of a regard to revelation; and that, even by maintaining the natural abilities of the human mind to discover, without any supernatural assistance, every thing in religion which we are concerned to know. You, Sir, are too zealous a christian to be pressed with such a consequence; or to be told, that if your subsequent discourse (page 18, 19.) be right, when taken in connection with this principle, it will lead to a conclusion, that men may live at random, not having sense enough to be capable of rendering an account to God for their actions. It would, I doubt not, be well for some, if this were indeed the case; but I hope, none that pretend to reason against religion, will imagine they have any pretence to take shelter in such a thought. If this admonition be a digression, you will, I hope, pardon it, in favour of those, who I dare say are the greatest admirers of your performance; and I will now return to remind you, in direct answer to what you advance, that daily experience shews the capacities of mankind in general not to be so weak, as (just to serve a present purpose,) you are pleased to suppose them. Do not people in low life reason on the common occurrences of it? Do they not learn the art of numbers, and often know how to apply it in cases where the reason of that application requires much more than one medium to find it out? I suppose, the natural understanding of men, in different stations of life, is on an average pretty equal, and that education generally makes the chief difference; and I have had an opportunity of observing, that among those who enter on academical studies, (and reasoning is not much cultivated in grammar schools,) there is not one in some scores, who, with proper instructions, does not in a few days grow capable of entering into the force of Euclid's Demonstrations. And I hope, none will have so little modesty as not readily to acknowledge, that the reasonings by which christianity is proved in the plain pieces I referred to above, are much easier, and less abstruse, than those relating to the properties of mathematical figures to persons to whom they are entirely new. Objections therefore taken from the supposed impossibility of entering into the proofs offered, can only take place with regard to persons, who when grown up are so unhappy as to want common sense; of whom it cannot be supposed, that either of us intended to speak, in what we have said on either side of the question in debate between us.

But you will not fail to remonstrate, as you have already

done at large, (p. 13, 14.) that supposing the rational evidence of christianity ever so intelligible, it will at least require time for the most candid enquirer to make himself master of it; and while he is pursuing it, he continues in a state of extreme danger; because he is hesitating about that, on an immediate compliance with which his salvation depends. But to this, which really appears to me the most considerable difficulty you have suggested, I beg leave to answer, that the examination requires not near so much time as you would represent; and that while the mind is pursuing it, there is no need at all that it should be in a state of infidelity, and, consequently, of danger as to its final happiness, if life should end before the examination is finished.

You, Sir, I think by one of the most palpable sophisms that I have any where met with, every where affect to represent the case in question, as if a man could have no rational evidence of christianity, till he had enquired, on the one hand, into every thing that could be said either to confirm, or even to illustrate it; and, on the other, into every objection that has been brought against it. And if this be not granted, all your flourishes, (p. 61—63.) will be mere ornaments of wit and eloquence, entirely wide of the matter in debate. On the contrary, it seems self-evident, that this is so far from being necessary to make a rational and intelligent christian, that it is not necessary to constitute an able and an accomplished divine. View it in any other instance, and you cannot but allow what I say. Would you maintain, that a man cannot be fit to practise as a lawyer, or a physician, till he has read every thing that has been writ in any controversy relating to those professions? It would be much more apparently absurd, to insist upon this polemical omniscience, (if I may be allowed the expression,) in the case before us: since, at that rate, a competent number of infidels might, without urging one material argument, overthrow christianity, supposing it in itself ever so rational, merely by writing a greater number of books about it, than any one man could be able to read.

On the whole, controversies relating to christianity are endless; but what is essential to the proof of it lies within a very little room, and may be set in so plain and easy a light, that a man may in a few hours, with attentive thought, be competently master of the argument. If indeed he desires copiously and curiously to examine the particular branches of it, he must allow proportionable time and labour; but it is by no means necessary, though you, Sir, seem constantly to take it for granted, that he should be all this while in suspense, as to the truth of the gospel in general. Every topic of argument is not so fun-

damental, as that the whole evidence of christianity should depend on that topic; much less is every particular proof belonging to each topic so; and least of all, the circumstance of every particular proof. I might, for instance, see great reason to believe christianity to be true, even though I knew nothing of its extraordinary success and speedy propagation in the first ages of the church: or I might be sure, that it was early propagated through vast tracts of land, with circumstances which afford a strong conviction of its truth, though I were yet to learn, whether it reached India or Britain during those early days; and if it did, whether the christians of St. Thomas received it from the apostle of that name, or our happy island from St. Paul. I may be sure, that Jesus was prophesied of in the Old Testament, while I am entirely dubious how Daniel's weeks are to be calculated; nay, I may be uncertain as to some niceties in the calculation, and yet be in general sure, that the period they mark out is elapsed, and that it ended much about the time of Christ.

And as a consequence of all this it is evident, that books on various topics relating to christianity may be highly valuable, and yet by no means necessary to lay a rational foundation for our faith. They may suggest new thoughts; they may place arguments urged many ages ago, in a clearer and more beautiful light; they may obviate difficulties, which ingenious men have started, and artfully aggravated; and thus they may demand the esteem and gratitude of the christian world, to which the learned and worthy authors of the analogy between reason and revelation, and of the trial of the witnesses, are undoubtedly intitled; and yet "the evidence of the gospel, like its great author, might be *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*," notwithstanding all you are pleased so shrewdly to insinuate on this head. (p. 20—22.)

But waving this, which, though I thought it necessary to touch upon it here, relates not immediately to the case of common christians, you will, I doubt not, be ready to remind me, that let the evidence to be offered to their consideration be ever so short, and ever so plain, yet some time must be taken up in examining it, even that part of it which is most essential: and while that examination continues, they must be in a state of dangerous hesitation; since to doubt concerning the truth of christianity is (according to your representation of the matter,) a damnable apostacy from it.

In answer to this part of the objection, I am compelled to say that I apprehend there is in it a complication of errors. I

cannot, in the first place, see how the faith of a christian is utterly cancelled by every doubt and suspicion which arises in his mind. Our thoughts are not entirely under our own command, and natural temper may sometimes suggest fears, which reason can neither authorise, nor exclude. The humble christian, conscious on the one hand, of the imperfection of his character, and on the other, of the greatness of his hopes, may be ready sometimes to suspect, that the gospel is too good news to be true. Now where will you find your proofs, either from scripture, or from reason, that every such suspicion is an apostacy from the faith, and that it is damnable thus to be tempted?

But to cut the grand sinew of your objection, I will presume to say, how widely soever it may differ from the schemes you have formed on this subject, that I apprehend, a man may be rationally established in the faith of the gospel, and may have candidly examined the evidences of it, without ceasing to believe it while he pursues that examination; which I think may easily appear from what I have represented above, and I the rather repeat it, as you, Sir, seem so studious to keep your reader from one thought of it.

Having once learnt what the gospel scheme is, I can never doubt of its being admirably calculated to elevate, to purify, and to strengthen the soul, to fix it on God, and to open it in sentiments of the most sincere and generous benevolence to men. Of this I am as sure, as that there is a gospel scheme at all, or such a book as the New Testament existing in the world. Nor can I ever question for a moment, after having read that admirable book with attention, that there seem to be in it all imaginable signs of integrity, piety, and goodness in the heart of its writers. Both these will appear strong presumptions of its truth and authority, and such as would require cogent arguments on the other side to balance them: Arguments, which till I hear, I see no reason to set myself to surmise. And as it is likely in theory, that a religion attended with strong internal evidence, will not be left destitute of external, I shall set myself to examine into that, under the apprehension of a strong probability, that it will turn out in favour of the gospel.

I remember indeed, that you somewhere speak with sovereign contempt of "*that enquiry*, which is *intended* with a shrewd *foreboding* how the matter will end." But I must intreat you to ask yourself again, whether it is not possible for the most impartial mind, in some cases, to have such forebodings; nay, whether it be always possible to avoid them, even when

entering on the most resolutely impartial examination? Consider the matter in subjects where the severest reasoning takes place, and where there can be no interest to bribe the assent, I mean, where mathematical theorems are concerned.

I question not, Sir, but you have observed, if you ever turned your thoughts this way at all, that there is often an observable proportion in the figure of a diagram, which leads a man to think the proposition true, as soon as he reads is. Besides, that having found demonstration attending all the former propositions, suppose of Euclid, he naturally concludes, he shall find it in the proposition in question. He would not perhaps accept a bett of a thousand guineas to one, against the force of a demonstration, which he has not yet studied; and which, notwithstanding this grand foreboding, he shall be able as freely and fairly to canvas, as he ever did any of the former. So little does there seem in this part of the argument, which you have pushed with so much eagerness and triumph.

But to return to the case of young persons, to be instructed in the evidences of christianity, the matter we were considering, and from whence my regard to this favourite topic of yours led me to digress a little too far:—I freely own, and leave you, Sir, to make the best of the concession, I would not have youth led into any doubts about these matters, till their understandings arrive at a strength and solidity capable of encountering with them. I would not represent christianity to my catechumens, or my children, nor indeed to the most intelligent and judicious of my hearers, as a dubious uncertain thing, where the probabilities were so equal, that it was quite precarious which way an honest enquirer would see reason to determine. It appears to my reason, and conscience, quite in another point of light, as an evident and certain truth, which I assuredly know; in which I rejoice as the anchor of my own soul, and which I verily believe must be the salvation of theirs, if they are saved at all. With these views it would be a horrible iniquity in me, to speak slightly and dubiously about it: yet I may in a perfect consistence with this persuasion, and with the declaration of it, recommend it to others, not as on my own authority, but on the force of reasons, concerning the strength of which they are to judge for themselves; though I am ever so earnestly solicitous, that they may judge aright, as knowing how strictly they are to answer for the integrity of their conduct in this affair.

But here I am well aware, you will glory over me as convicted by my own confession. You will tell me, that all this scheme

of educating children in christian principles, and recommending them with so much confidence and delight, is an avowed method of prejudicing their minds strongly on one side of the question, and utterly inconsistent with any pretence of bringing them to a fair and honest enquiry; in order to which it is absolutely necessary, that a man come to search after truth without any pre-conceived opinion at all, and perfectly indifferent on which side he may happen to find it.

This I confess, Sir, has a plausible sound, and is a charming subject for a young academic, or a very young preacher, if he has a mind to display his talent at declamation: but after all, it is perfect knight errantry, and lays down a law to mankind which it is in many instances impossible they should follow, and which, of consequence, can be neither necessary, nor reasonable. The affections of the human mind may indeed be controlled, but they cannot be extirpated; nor is it needful men should be insensible, in order to their being impartial. Had Junius Brutus, when he saw his sons arraigned before him for treason against their country, been thus philosophically indifferent whether they were innocent or guilty, he had been the idiot he formerly counterfeited, or something worse than that; and yet he did justice: and in other circumstances, with all the bowels of a father melting over them, he might have been equally just in acquitting them. A man may have strict reason for assenting to what he has been taught from his very infancy, and where the truth is greatly for his interest; or otherwise who could have reason to believe himself heir to a kingdom, or an estate? A man may, I hope, have reason to believe the being of a God, yet who among us was not taught it from a child? or what virtuous mind does not see, that all its happiness is concerned in the question? Who would not esteem it far worse than death, to be brought to an apprehension that he lives in a fatherless world, and that all the resource which he thought he had found in the guardianship of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, was but the amusement of a pleasing dream?

And while I am on this topic, give me leave to touch on that notion, which some have entertained, of leaving children untaught in religion, that they may come unprejudiced to enquire into it: an absurdity, surely, to be numbered among the greatest, which the adventurous infidelity of the present age has started, or its implicit disciples have imbibed, in open, and perhaps boasted defiance of the common sense of mankind throughout all ages, nations, and religions. And yet I am told,

some who have continued to call themselves christians, have been wild enough to admit it. With them indeed I might justly cut short farther debate, by urging, what on their professed principles must be unanswerable, the most express authority both of the jewish and christian revelations, strongly requiring that children should be brought up in an early and familiar acquaintance with them. But for the sake of others I would observe, and would intreat every professed disciple of reason to consider, that the notion of omitting an education in religion, to avoid prejudice, is utterly inconsistent with itself. For it is certain, as the world now goes, and every infidel must surely in his conscience know it, that if the children of christians are not taught religion, and trained up in the exercises of it, they will soon learn vice and immorality, and then they will come to enquire into the evidences of christianity in time, (if they ever make the enquiry at all,) with this terrible prejudice on the negative side of the question, "If christianity be true, I am in a state of condemnation, and an heir of everlasting ruin: and I must relinquish all the dearest of my pleasures, in pursuit of a pretended felicity, which I had rather be annihilated, than confined to."

And indeed, Sir, we would gladly know, if children are not to be taught religion, on what principles they are to be taught virtue. The philosophical questions relating to the first principles, and ultimate obligations of morality, they can as little understand as those of religion: and if they are to be taught it, as in itself an amiable thing, and a thing which their parents know to be reasonable and conducive to their happiness, they may on the like foundation be taught to receive the gospel as the word of God, and, according to their little abilities, to worship, and live like christians.

I think I may conclude this head with an appeal to every man's conscience, Whether it would not be best for society in general, that our children should be taught christianity in their early years? Whether the history of a life and character like that of the blessed Jesus, be not one of the finest lessons they can learn? And whether an apprehension of our obligations to him as our great Redeemer, who, as the messenger and gift of his Father's love, taught such excellent truths, and did and suffered so much for our salvation, be not admirably calculated to touch their tender hearts, and form them to humility, gratitude, and love? I hope men of such lordly and towering understandings, as our deists generally are, will at least conde-

of educating children in christian principles, and recommending them with so much confidence and delight, is an avowed method of prejudicing their minds strongly on one side of the question, and utterly inconsistent with any pretence of bringing them to a fair and honest enquiry; in order to which it is absolutely necessary, that a man come to search after truth without any pre-conceived opinion at all, and perfectly indifferent on which side he may happen to find it.

This I confess, Sir, has a plausible sound, and is a charming subject for a young academic, or a very young preacher, if he has a mind to display his talent at declamation: but after all, it is perfect knight errantry, and lays down a law to mankind which it is in many instances impossible they should follow, and which, of consequence, can be neither necessary, nor reasonable. The affections of the human mind may indeed be controlled, but they cannot be extirpated; nor is it needful men should be insensible, in order to their being impartial. Had Junius Brutus, when he saw his sons arraigned before him for treason against their country, been thus philosophically indifferent whether they were innocent or guilty, he had been the idiot he formerly counterfeited, or something worse than that; and yet he did justice: and in other circumstances, with all the bowels of a father melting over them, he might have been equally just in acquitting them. A man may have strict reason for assenting to what he has been taught from his very infancy, and where the truth is greatly for his interest; or otherwise who could have reason to believe himself heir to a kingdom, or an estate? A man may, I hope, have reason to believe the being of a God, yet who among us was not taught it from a child? or what virtuous mind does not see, that all its happiness is concerned in the question? Who would not esteem it far worse than death, to be brought to an apprehension that he lives in a fatherless world, and that all the resource which he thought he had found in the guardianship of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, was but the amusement of a pleasing dream?

And while I am on this topic, give me leave to touch on that notion, which some have entertained, of leaving children untaught in religion, that they may come unprejudiced to enquire into it: an absurdity, surely, to be numbered among the greatest, which the adventurous infidelity of the present age has started, or its implicit disciples have imbibed, in open, and perhaps boasted defiance of the common sense of mankind throughout all ages, nations, and religions. And yet I am told,

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their works, or if they do not, seeming zealous for christianity, would have so little regard to themselves, or their cause, as to pretend to quote such passages, unless the books from whence they were taken were certainly extant; and the passages to be found there, containing the sense which they give them. The matter does not by any means rest upon our personal integrity; (though I hope in reporting a fact, some regard might be paid to that:) were the defenders of christianity ever so dishonest, it cannot be imagined they would obtrude such palpable falsehoods on the world, while so liable to be contradicted, and shamed, by those who disbelieve the gospel, and make it the great, though wretched business of their lives, to oppose it to the utmost of their power, and to revile its preachers and defenders. But are these assertions of ours, as to the passages in question, contradicted? Where is the deist who will dare to say, that christianity is not an ancient religion; that it did not arise and spread about the time I have mentioned; or that its professors did not early suffer in its defence? Where is the man who will venture to assert, that the most material books of the New Testament were not early received by christians; or that the authors in which we assert, that we find quotations from them, and references to them, did not really live in the ages and places we assert? Our books are open; and the facts and testimonies, on which we build our reasonings, are liable to be examined with all possible freedom, by our enemies, as well as our friends. If we have recourse to any pious frauds, (as they are scandalously called,) let those frauds be detected; and, in the name of the God of truth, let them be hissed out of the world, with a just abhorrence. But the contrary is so plain, that there is not an infidel in our land, that will presume to oppose the evidence of these things, and to set his name to such an attempt: nay, either some remains of modesty, or a consciousness of the hurt which their cause would receive from so shameless a defence, prevents even anonymous authors from attacking us here. The controversy is concerning the consequences drawn from these acknowledged facts; (that christianity was an ancient religion, and the New Testament early received, &c.) Now of these consequences the common people are themselves judges, on principles laid down above; and they do not admit them, because we, or any others, assert them to follow.

And here, Sir, I cannot forbear admiring the wisdom of divine providence, in permitting such perverse opposition to the gospel to arise, and continue; since even its avowed enemies, by the nature and manner of their attack, serve but more

assuredly to confirm the faith of impartial and intelligent enquirers, and give an authority and evidence to what the teachers of christianity assert, in some measure beyond what it could otherwise have had. Just as another kind of infidels, I mean the jews, are also vouchers for the antiquity and authority of the Old Testament, on which so many of our arguments depend, and those arguments of such validity, that as Mr. Addison well concluded, many who now dispute against the application of its prophecies to Christ, would, no doubt, have concluded them a christian forgery, and have argued that conclusion from the perspicuity of those prophecies, had not providence laid in so incontestable a proof to the contrary. *The wrath of man, Oh Lord, shall praise thee;* and *the remainder of* that *wrath shalt thou restrain.* I must on the same principle congratulate the happiness of our own country, in which such liberty is allowed, of proposing whatever can be said against christianity; in consequence of which our modern infidels are deprived of that shrewd pretence, which perhaps might be more serviceable to them than all the rest of their weapons, that they could say something convincing against it, if penal laws did not deter them.

I hope, Sir, these things will evince, that the common people may have some considerable degrees of evidence for those facts, on which the external proofs of christianity are built, though they are not capable of consulting the original records from whence they are taken. But I must not dismiss the subject, till I have considered an objection, which equally concerns the most learned christian: I mean, that none of the most rational arguments, in their clearest and strongest view, can give the mind satisfaction;—or at least can produce such a degree of persuasion, as should animate us to subdue our passions,—or to endure those extremities in defence of our religion, which we may possibly meet with, and which it indispensably requires us to bear.

You make these three distinct topics; but the former is so evidently included in the two latter, that all I shall say to it at present is, that every man who will reflect on his own mind, must find, that there are degrees of rational proof in which he acquiesces with entire satisfaction. Many christians testify this to be the case, with regard to the arguments in favour of christianity, of which great number I must declare myself one; and any one who finds himself dissatisfied, will do well to give his reasons for that dissatisfaction, without making his own case a standard, by which to pronounce on that of every one else.

You argue, as if there were no medium between an implicit faith, and perpetual scepticism; but the conclusion is very hastily drawn. You, Sir, may perhaps have known some, who have gradually quitted all religious principles, when they had begun to examine any; I, on the contrary, have known many, who have professed themselves to have been greatly confirmed in christianity by such examination: they have found its evidences, like gold, approved by the severest trials; and it is to me utterly unimaginable, how a rational believer should be incapable of finding complacency and satisfaction of mind, in having used his rational faculties on so important an occasion.

Waving therefore all farther debate upon this, I shall proceed to what you add under the two remaining parts of this argument; (page 30—35.) in which you undertake to shew, that "no conviction drawn from reasoning can ever have force enough to command our passions, so as on common emergencies" (they are your own extraordinary words) "to make a good christian—much less will it serve to produce a faithful martyr, if ever so severe an exercise be demanded at our hands." You employ a great deal of rhetoric on this subject, in the pages referred to above: but I am sorry to say, that, so far as I can judge, it amounts only to this, "That you apprehend something so extremely desirable in the indulgences which christianity prohibits, and something so terrible in death, in whatever view and cause it is to be encountered, that no rational argument imaginable can induce a man to give up the one, and expose himself to the other."

And is it possible, Sir, that sensual pleasure, and mortal life purchased at the expence of honour, gratitude, and conscience, can indeed appear so exceeding valuable? I would not wrong your moral character so much, as to suppose, that you seriously meant this, and will abide by it; and yet it is difficult to imagine, how it could be written otherwise than seriously, without bearing hard on another part of moral character too. But I will leave it among the other mysteries of your book, and content myself with hinting at those reasons, for which the matter appears to me in a quite contrary view; as I am persuaded, it would have done to Socrates, Seneca, or Epictetus, had they considered it only in theory.

No paradox in human nature appears to me so strange, as that a man, who in his conscience believes, that the arguments in favour of christianity are unanswerably strong, should deliberately allow himself in the violation of its precepts; or should, by any temporal considerations whatsoever, be induced to

renounce it. All the pleas of duty, gratitude, and interest, are so weighty, in favour of a constant and resolute subjection to it, that one could hardly imagine, did not fact demonstrate the contrary, that any temptation of allurement, or of terror, should, with a rational creature, who believed the gospel, triumph over them.

Nor is a life of christian obedience that violent and constrained thing, which you seem to suppose. Were I to judge by these pages alone, I should imagine you had never read the New Testament, and did not know how the views of a christian are animated and raised. Oh Sir, the rational believer is in his heart and conscience persuaded, that, to all the bounties of his common providence, God has added the riches of redeeming love. He is fully persuaded, that the Son of God descended from heaven, to deliver him from everlasting ruin; that he has generously purchased him with the price of *his own blood;* and that (if he be conscious of a true faith in him,) Christ has taken him as his peculiar property under his guardian care, with a gracious purpose of conducting him safely through life and death, of receiving his nobler part in a very little time into the abode of holy and happy spirits, and at length of raising his body from the dust, and fixing his complete person in a state of immortal glory and felicity. Now when this is really believed, and the conviction is firm and lively, (which I hope a rational conviction may very possibly be,) what can be a more natural effect, than that an ardent love to God our Father, and to the Lord Jesus Christ, should be excited by it? And it is easy to imagine, that this love must make obedience easy: and when the mind is taken up with such sublime and delightful views, and those devotional exercises which it is so natural to ingraft upon them, it will not be so hard a matter as many seem to imagine, to conquer the irregular propensities of animal nature, or the exorbitances of passion, where only the little enjoyments and interests of this transitory life are concerned. Or rather, many of those exorbitances will be superseded, or as the apostle justly and finely expresses it, *crucified by the cross of Christ;* and the affections without any painful struggle will generally flow on in an orderly and pleasant channel.

And where this is the temper and character, martyrdom may not appear so dreadful a thing, as you, Sir, have taken pains to represent it. It may rather be the habitual judgment of such a christian, that it is to be esteemed an honor and favour, which our great Lord bestows on some of his most beloved servants. To be excused from the melancholy circumstances

attending death in its natural form; to have an opportunity of turning the common lot of mortality into an occasion of manifesting heroic gratitude and fidelity to the best of masters and of friends; to die with those warm sentiments and elevated views which such a condition so naturally tends to excite and suggest, would not surely be, as you seem to insinuate, the death of a fool; (which I cannot think even that of Socrates to have been:) surely, Sir, on second thoughts you must rather judge it a consummation of the labours, cares, and sorrows inseparable from human life, to be devoutly wished for, rather than dreaded. I will on the other hand grant, that hellish acts of cruelty may be invented and practised, under which the resolution of an upright mind may faint, and even reason itself be overborne, unless God were pleased to interpose by extraordinary supports, which there is great encouragement to hope he would in such a case do: but while reason remains undisturbed, I should imagine, that death in its most horrible form, when met in the cause of such a Saviour who had so graciously borne it for us, should appear more desirable than life in its most agreeable circumstances; and surely then, infinitely more desirable than life purchased by base ingratitude to him, and worn out under the sense of his just displeasure, and the sad prospect of being finally disowned by him, as an apostate and a traitor.

This, I think, to be solid reason; and I bless God, there are numberless facts which confirm it, and shew, that persons not pretending to any such immediate revelation as you assert to be necessary, have conquered the greatest difficulties on these principles, and, after having adorned the gospel by a most exemplary and holy life, have steadily and cheerfully sealed it with their blood. And every fact of this kind is so unanswerable an argument against all that you alledge here, that I do not judge it necessary to pursue this part of my reply any farther.

With this therefore I conclude what I had to offer in vindication of the perspicuity and solidity of those arguments in proof of christianity, to which the generality of its professors among us may attain: and I hope it will be allowed, that I have fairly and candidly, as well as seriously considered what you object against it, and so have answered the first part of your pamphlet, which I take to be by far the most plausible and dangerous.

Your endeavours to prove, that christianity itself avows, that it is not built upon argument, but on a revelation to be immediately made from the Spirit of God to every christian,

by which all argument is superseded, and all possibility of doubt and error excluded, is such a direct contradiction to the whole tenour of the New Testament, that I hardly think you would be understood seriously to mean it. It is sufficient, that you have shewn, you have wit enough to give a varnish to so wild a notion. Yet lest any should be so weak, as to imagine there is any solidity in what you have so adventurously advanced on that head, I am willing plainly to discuss it with you; and at the same time to enquire into what you say, with regard to the awful sentence which the gospel passes on those who reject it: a circumstance, which you every where represent as utterly irreconcilable with a religion to be rationally proved and defended; but which, on the contrary, appears to me most wisely adapted to the rest of the scheme, and, when compared with it, an addition rather than abatement of its internal evidence. This and several other particulars in yours, I should be glad to examine; but I wave it at present, because this letter is already swelled to a pretty large size. I therefore reserve what I have farther to say to another opportunity, and I hope a few weeks more may afford it. But I chuse to send you what I have already written, without any farther delay; because I am conscious of the many hindrances, which, in a life like mine, oblige me often to postpone, much longer than I intended, the execution of attempts to do what little I can towards serving the world, by promoting the interest of christianity in it; and because I really think your piece has been already too long unanswered. If you please to offer any thing in reply to what I have here proposed, I shall give it a serious consideration: and hope that I shall, in the whole course of this controversy, endeavour to write like a christian, and then I shall not forget any other character which, I could wish to maintain. At present, Sir, I conclude with assuring you, that it is with sensible regret I have found myself obliged, for the honour of the gospel, and the preservation of men's souls, to animadvert on what you wrote, in the manner I have already done. Should you prove, which may possibly be the case, some old acquaintance and friend, I hope I have written nothing which should make me blush at any interview with you; and should you, as I rather apprehend, be an entire stranger, I am, on the common principles of that faith, which it is the great glory of my life to profess and defend, with sincere good wishes for your temporal and eternal happiness, in any thing which may conduce to either,

Sir, your obedient humble Servant,

Northampton, Nov. 5, 1742.

P. DODDRIDGE.

LETTER II.

SIR,

THOUGH my former Letter considered what I thought most essential in your late Treatise, yet there are several other things in it, which however designed, have so plain a tendency to expose christianity to suspicion, and even to contempt, that on the principles which led me to animadvert upon it before, I find myself obliged to give you this second trouble.

I proceed therefore, without any farther ceremony, to consider the pains you have taken, under the second general head of your tract, to represent the gospel as pleading guilty to the charge of not being founded on argument; or in other words not being generally capable of such rational proof, as its disciples may be able to receive.

You would seem indeed, if one may judge by your manner of introducing this topic, to think this is doing great kindness to the New Testament, as it delivers it from the absurdity of saying, "Judge, whether you have time, or not:—Judge, whether you are judges, or not:—Judge all for yourselves, and yet judge all alike." (page 35.) But I hope, Sir, before I have finished my Letter, to shew, that all, whom we can suppose to be concerned in any demand of judging, i. e. all persons of common understanding, to whom the gospel is, or has been, faithfully and intelligently preached, can have no just plea from the want of time, or capacity, and must, on the supposition of an honest and diligent enquiry, all judge alike, i. e. all agree in receiving it as a divine revelation.

To illustrate and confirm the view you have given of the matter, you undertake to shew,—that Christ did not propose his doctrines to examination; (page 36—38.)—that his apostles had neither leisure, nor qualifications, for such a method, i. e. for the use of reasoning and argument in the propagation of the gospel; (page 38—40.)—and that the very supposition of such a proceeding is evidently preposterous from the nature of the thing. (page 41—46.) In opposition to all which, it is one of the easiest tasks one can imagine, to shew,—that Christ did propose the great doctrines he taught to examination;— that the apostles did the same, urging (as their blessed Master had done,) most cogent arguments in the proof of them;—and that any other method of proceeding had been preposterous, and must necessarily have exposed the gospel to the contempt of all reasonable people. It seems hard, indeed, to be put upon proving things so conspicuous as these; and it cannot but be

some trial of temper to one who honours and loves the gospel, to see it, and its glorious founders, placed in so ridiculous a view, as that in which your assertions and arguments represent them; that is, described as wild enthusiasts, running all over the world, at the expence of their own lives, to urge men on pain of damnation to receive a religion, for which they did not pretend to give them any reason. But out of respect both to you, and the cause in which I am engaged, I will keep myself as calm as I can. And if some following pages seem to my reader unnecessary, I must beg him to distinguish between what was needful to inform him, and what was requisite to confute you.

But before I proceed to hint at the evident proof of the three propositions, which in opposition to yours I have laid down above, I beg leave to premise, that all you say on this subject seems to me founded on an artful and sophistical shifting the question. The grand matter in debate is, whether christianity is founded on rational argument; or whether the only cause, which a professor of the gospel can generally have to give for his belief of it, must be, that God has immediately revealed it to him by his spirit, and testified the truth of it to him, in a manner, which as, on the one hand, he cannot suspect, so on the other, he cannot communicate or explain? Instead of discussing this question, you put off the reader with another very different, (page 36.) Whether Christ and his apostles submitted their doctrine to examination? which is a very ambiguous manner of speaking: and when you assert that they did not, I must beg leave to ask, what you mean by their doctrine? Do you mean this general doctrine, that they were teachers sent from God? Or do you mean those particular doctrines, which in consequence of that general assertion they proceeded to teach? If you mean the former, it is indeed to your purpose; but, as I shall presently shew, is a proposition entirely and notoriously false. But if you mean the latter, which the course of your arguments seems to imply, then it is quite foreign to your purpose: for christianity may be founded on rational argument, though the first teachers of it, when they had proved their mission, should have put the credit of particular doctrines on their own authorized testimony alone, without discussing the several branches of their system, in such a manner as it would have been necessary they should have done, had they proposed it only as a theory, destitute of external proofs.

Now that our Lord Jesus Christ did not expect, that it should be believed merely on his own testimony, that he was a

teacher sent from God, and one whose doctrine was consequently true and divine, but set himself to prove it, is so evident from the history of the evangelists, that I believe few readers need so much as to be reminded of particular passages on this head. No words can be more express than those, in which he has disclaimed this. *If* (says he,) *I bear testimony of my self* alone, *my testimony is not true* or valid; *but my Father who hath sent me, he beareth testimony to me**. And you well know, that he illustrated and argued this testimony of the Father, partly from the predictions of those sacred writings which they acknowledged to be the word of God, in which Jesus declared he was described and foretold; and partly from the attestation of John, whom they generally acknowledged to be a divinely inspired prophet; but principally, from a yet more sensible argument than either, *the works which the Father had given him to perform, and which* (says he,) *bear witness of me*†. And all these he represents as illustrated by the excellent design and tendency of his preaching, to which he plainly refers, when he says, *The word which I have spoken, shall judge* the unbeliever *another day*‡.

These were various and cogent arguments; some of them so very plain, that one single day, or hour, might make a man master of them: I mean, that arising from his miraculous powers, and the tendency of his doctrine to promote real goodness. The argument from John's testimony was, even by the confession of his enemies, known to all the nation; and as for that from prophecy, he submitted it to their candid and deliberate examination, urging them to search the scriptures, and assuring them that if they did so, they would there find a convincing *testimony concerning him*§, which was to shine with growing evidence. And on the whole, he expostulates with them, in language utterly irreconcileable with your scheme; *And why even of yourselves*, from plain appearances, and without farther explications and remonstrances from me, *judge you not that which is right?* pleading that the signs of the times, marking them out to be those of the Messiah, were as discernable as any of those prognostications of the weather, which all the world had observed, and formed into common proverbs‖. So that, in consequence of all, their continued unbelief, in the midst of so many united testimonies and palpable proofs, was not only an irrational and criminal, but a most inexcusable

* John v. 31, 37. † John v. 36. ‡ John xii. 48. § John v. 39.
‖ Luke xii. 56, 57. and Mat. xvi. 2, 3.

thing. *If I had not* (says he,) *come and spoken unto them, and done among them the works which no other man did,* though their disobedience to the law of God had been justly punishable, yet, in comparison of their present case, *they had not had sin; but now, they have no cloak for their sin.** Could they have pleaded, as you, Sir, it seems would have taught them to do, "We never had any reason offered to bring us to believe;" I suppose, it would have been no despicable cloak for their infidelity. I cannot forbear saying, that it is a grievous outrage upon the character of our blessed Redeemer, to suppose him capable of talking in so wild, so false, and so inconsistent a manner, as this wretched hypothesis would imply. I should have too great a respect for the memory of Socrates, to advance, or admit, any thing so injurious to it.

That the apostles also reasoned in the defence of their mission, is just as certain as that they preached and wrote; and indeed the fifth book of the New Testament is almost as much the history of their reasonings, as of their acts. The second chapter contains an account of their reasoning at Jerusalem, from the fact of the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, in comparison with the predictions of the Old Testament, both with respect to that, and to the resurrection of Jesus; from whence they strongly infer, that *all the house of Israel* might *know assuredly, that God had made that same Jesus whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ*†. The third, fourth, and fifth chapters relate their reasonings before the people and the Sanhedrim, from the *cure of the lame man in the temple*, as wrought *in tha name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified*‡. And it would be tedious, rather than necessary, to continue the enumeration of particular passages, in which we read of Paul's reasoning in confirmation of these great points; as we are told he did at Damascus§, at Jerusalem‖, at Antioch in Pisidia¶, and particularly at Thessalonica, where when his reasoning with the jews out of the scriptures for three successive sabbaths is spoken of, it is said to have been *as his manner was***. You cannot but know, that as he continued this practice at Berœa, the inhabitants of that place are greatly commended, for examining the force of his arguments, and *searching the scriptures daily, whether these things were so*††. His reasoning with the philosophers at

* John xv. 22, 24. † Acts ii. 36. ‡ Acts iii. 12—16. iv. 10. § Acts ix. 22.
‖ Acts ix. 28, 29. ¶ Acts xiii. 16—41. ** Acts xvii. 2, 3. †† Acts xvii. 11.

Athens*, from natural principles, to demonstrate the absurdity of image worship, is so conclusive and so noble, that I cannot suppose it to have escaped your notice or memory. I am sorry to be under the necessity of reminding you, that at Corinth, where he continued for a year and a half, he *reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath*†, at least for a considerable part of that time; that at Ephesus, *he preached in the synagogue for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God*‡; and after this, having *separated the disciples*, he *disputed daily in the school of one Tyrannus*, continuing this practice for the *space of two years*§; that he *made his defence* with great presence of mind, before the jews at Jerusalem‖; that he reasoned with Felix of *righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come*, in such a manner that he *made him tremble*¶, and pleaded with such strength of argument before Agrippa, that he *almost persuaded him to be a christian***. And the history closes with an account of his appointing a day to the jews at Rome, in which they attended him at his lodging, and *he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening*††. What the force and validity of these reasonings were, is not at all the question between us: it is sufficient, that the passages referred to demonstrate, that reasonings were used, and objections heard, directly contrary to what you, Sir, have been pleased to assert, (p. 39.) with as much confidence, as if you had never read these passages, or never expected that what you have written should be compared with the records to which you appeal.

It is equally easy to shew, that the apostles reason in their epistles; and with what force, many valuable commentators have shewn at large. But as it would be out of my way to consider those reasonings now, I content myself with mentioning one passage, as a specimen of many more: *I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say*‡‡. A text, in which there seems to be a spring, that will not easily bend to your interpretation. But the whole New Testament is so full of reasonings, that it is quite superfluous to enumerate particulars.

Now when these things are thus evident in fact, it signifies little to say, that the apostles had not time, or qualifications, to

* Acts xvii. 22—31. † Acts xviii. 4, 11. ‡ Acts xix. 8.
§ Acts xix. 9, 10. ‖ Acts xxii. 1—21. ¶ Acts xxiv. 25.
** Acts xxvi. 2—28. †† Acts xxviii. 23. ‡‡ 1 Cor. x. 15.

maintain an argument; and that in the nature of things it would have been preposterous for them to have attempted it. If what you say on these topics (p. 38—45.) were conclusive, when compared with what I have produced above, the conclusion would be something very different from what you professedly labour to establish:—it would shew, that the apostles acted in an irrational and preposterous manner. But I am in no pain for their reputation on this head, in consequence of any thing which you have asserted; for all your reasonings are built on a forgetfulness, or misrepresentation, of those topics of argument, on which the apostles laid the great stress of their cause.

It is very true, that many curious and subtle questions in pneumatology, metaphysics, and ethics, might have been connected with some articles which the apostles taught; and a whole life might have been spent in canvassing all that a disputatious caviller might have objected. It was indeed beneath the dignity of an apostle's character, and inconsistent with his important work, to unravel all these cobwebs, thread by thread. Yet God was pleased to furnish them with the proper and rational means of sweeping them away, as it were, at once. Inspiration could, no doubt, have furnished them for a minute discussion of every artful sophism, and have taught them to range metaphysical arguments with an accuracy far exceeding that of Aristotle: but the generality of mankind was not capable of entering into such curiosities; and therefore it was an instance of great wisdom and goodness in the great Author of our religion, to furnish them with a much nobler kind of arguments, equally convincing to all candid and upright minds, which might soon be set in a very strong and easy light. And accordingly they insisted upon these.—They asserted, that God, having sent Christ into the world to be a divine teacher, raised him from the dead, after he had been cruelly slain by wicked and incorrigible men; that, quickly after this, he received him into heaven, from whence he had sent down upon them an extraordinary, divine influence, to instruct them in the truth, and to enable them to preach it to the world in a very convincing manner: in consequence of which, men were no longer under the necessity of investigating divine truths by the slow progress of philosophical argumentation; but were to come with humble simplicity of soul, to hear and receive what God by them taught concerning himself, and his Son, and the way of obtaining final and eternal happiness.—They never expected, that so

important and comprehensive an assertion should be taken on the credit of their own word: but to shew, that God was indeed with them, and that he himself taught mankind by them, they wrought such miracles as sensibly demonstrated his extraordinary presence and agency.——And that this might appear a scheme, long since formed in the divine mind, and intimated to men long before it opened upon them, they produced passages in the ancient and sacred books of the jews, in which their prophets had plainly described this Jesus as the Messiah, and marked out various particulars, which had an evident accomplishment in him; waving many other predictions, which could not so easily be ascertained and illustrated at that time, though future ages and occurrences have made them very considerable to us.—The apostles also urged, or frequently referred to, the excellent tendency of their doctrine to promote real virtue and goodness in the world, and the happy influence it had on those who sincerely entertained it, which made the acceptance or rejection of it a test of characters; as they often intimate, and sometimes expressly assert, that it was*. And from all these things, which were plain and evident, they most rationally inferred the obligation, which their hearers were under, to submit themselves to those doctrines, laws, and institutions of Christ, which they as his authorized messengers brought them, and to adhere to his cause whatever it might cost them. And all this they confirmed by communicating to great numbers of their new converts different gifts and operations of the Holy Ghost, that produced sensible effects; which might also tend to convince others, that the doctrine they had received was supernatural and divine.

These particulars constituted, what one may call the apostolic demonstration; and they allowed their hearers a competent time to examine it. It is true indeed, the time and labour of these holy men were of too great importance, to permit them to make a long stay in places, where the inhabitants would not so much as receive them, nor give them an hearing, nor would the mild and peaceful genius of their religion allow them to endeavour, even by miracle, to force their continuance in any place, from which the magistrates and people joined to expel them. In cases of this nature alone, they were directed to quit

* Compare Rom. i. 16—18. vi. 17—22. viii. 2, 4. xii. 2. 1 Cor. vi. 9—11. 2 Cor. iii. 1, 2. iv. 2, 3. Gal. v. 18—24. Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12. iv. 17—24. v. 6—14. Phil. ii. 15, 16. Col. i. 4, 5, 6, 9—13, 21, 22. iii. 4—10. 1 Thess. ii. 1—10. v. 5—8. 2 Thess. i. 3—10. 1 Tim. i. 5. Tit. ii. 9—14. 1 Pet. i. 14—22. iv. 2—6. 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. 1 John i. 5, 6, 7. ii. 4, 5, 29. iii. 6—10. iv. 5, 6, 12. v. 1—5, 19. 2 John 1, 2, 6.

them, with that striking circumstance, which you so much misrepresent, *of shaking off the dust off their feet*, in token of their looking on such despisers as devoted to certain destruction. But yet in other places, where any of their hearers desired their stay, and the rulers permitted it, they abode awhile with them; and if we may judge of the conduct of others by that of the apostle Paul, who seems one of the most active and itinerant of them all, that stay sometimes extended to months, and sometimes to years. During this time they were, so far as we can learn by the New Testament, willing to dispute publicly with all opposers, and to answer any objections which could be urged against the truth of their doctrine, and the authority of their mission, whether by Jews or Gentiles. And if, which we have no reason to imagine a common case, they sometimes cut short the debate, by inflicting on perverse opponents miraculous judgments, those punishments carried a rational conviction of the authority of the apostles: but I recollect no instance of a miracle of this kind on such an occasion, but that of Elymas the Jewish Sorcerer*, who probably opposed the gospel, either by lying wonders, or by misrepresentations of the Old Testament, of which a Roman governor could not easily judge: on either of which suppositions, there would be a remarkable propriety in this extraordinary step; in which instance, by the way, great gentleness was intermixed with the apparent severity, as it was only for a season he was deprived of his sight.

If in cases, and with proofs like these, thousands were converted at a single lecture, as you express it, it is certainly to be ascribed to the validity of their arguments, in concurrence with the operation of God's spirit, to subdue their prejudices, and make them willing cordially to embrace, and courageously to confess the truth; of which, many who did not profess it, were no doubt in their consciences inwardly convinced. Yet I cannot think after all, that its success on the day of Pentecost, where so many peculiar circumstances occurred, is to be looked upon as a specimen of the rapidity with which it commonly prevailed.

This, Sir, appears to me a just representation of the case: that which you have been pleased to make, in the pages last referred to, is very different; and I apprehend, it will be easy to shew, there are two material errors which attend it. It supposes the case to be determined much more difficult than it really was, and the assent universally required much more im-

* Acts xiii. 6—11.

mediate. And as these two palpable fallacies run through several other passages of your book, I must take the liberty to examine them a little more particularly.

You represent the question concerning the truth of christianity, as taught by the apostles, to have been much more difficult than it really was. "Eternal relations, moral differences of things, and a precise delineation of the religion of nature and its obligations, were all" not only material, but, (as you say in page 42.) "indispensable articles to be treated of in the way, and inculcated as the foundation of such a superstructure." Now here I would first observe, that so far as the Jews were concerned in this matter, a great part of these preliminary controversies was quite superseded. They already believed, that there was one God, the supreme Lord of all, whose law required universal virtue, and had denounced an awful curse against every instance of wilful and presumptuous disobedience: they likewise believed, that in various preceding ages this God had raised up prophets, with miraculous powers, first to introduce, and afterwards to confirm, the religion which they professed: and they were also fully persuaded, that the Messiah was to appear, about that time, to establish the cause of God and of righteousness in the world. To such the apostles presented themselves, as messengers from the God of their Fathers; turned them to passages of their own sacred books, in which the sufferings as well as the triumphs of the Messiah were evidently foretold; and shewed them, by the account they gave of Christ, confirmed by the miracles which they wrought in his name, that they must submit to his authority, on the very same principles on which that of Moses was acknowledged by them; and that they must hearken to him, or, according to the testimony of Moses himself, must expect *to be cut off from among the people**.

Where idolatrous gentiles were to be addressed to, there was indeed a greater difficulty; yet it was by no means equal to what you, Sir, would represent. Bad as they were, they had not lost all distinction between virtue and vice, nor all notion of a supreme governor of the world. The popular religion received among them was so flagrantly absurd, as to admit of being easily exposed. And when they heard that those vices, which contrary to the light of their own consciences they indulged themselves in, exposed them to the divine displeasure; and saw such sensible proofs of his presence and

* Acts iii 22, 23.

both the principles of the jewish revelation, and of natural religion, might easily have taught them; light would gradually break in upon their minds, and they would *know, if they followed on to know the Lord.* I challenge you, Sir, to produce any one line in the New Testament, that intimates the apostles would discourage such persons as these; on the contrary, that humanity and gentleness, that meekness and humility, which every where appear in their conduct and writings, and for which they so justly celebrate their great Master, would no doubt teach them to treat such enquirers tenderly and kindly, and to cherish them as hopeful persons, who were *not far from the kingdom of God.* A little time would probably lead a candid upright mind through its difficulties, amidst so many shining evidences, which must impress and convince, in proportion to the attention with which they were viewed. And if the public concerns of the churches did require the apostles, as they possibly might, to quit such modest and humble enquirers as these, before they arrived at full satisfaction; they would, in every place where they had planted a christian church, leave persons behind them, furnished with miraculous gifts, who might build on the foundation they had laid, and complete the work which they had begun, in such honest and teachable souls.

There might indeed be a third sort of persons, whose state was a medium between that of these, and of the scorners we mentioned before: I mean, such as were indolent about the matter; neither positively persuaded that christianity was false, nor quite convinced that it was true, nor solicitous to bring their doubts to an issue; but concluding, that whether it were true or false, they might find out a path to happiness without it. This was probably the case of many then, as it undoubtedly is the case of many in our days. Now such as these were not to be looked upon as fair enquirers, but as triflers in the most serious of all affairs: and as acting the most absurd and inconsistent part: for as christianity pretended to be a matter of the utmost importance, in neglecting it they acted as if it were assuredly false, while yet they confessed that they knew not but it might be true. A conduct, which was rendered especially inexcusable by that grand apparatus, with which providence interposed to introduce it, which if it proved any thing at all concerning it, must prove it to be of infinite moment. Persons of the sceptical turn, which you know, Sir, to have been very common among the ancients, might perhaps sometimes amuse themselves with proposing their doubts to christian

have juster and more extensive notions of the beauty and glory of its internal evidences, as their experimental acquaintance with it increased, and their understandings improved with their graces.

This, I hope, may make it evident, that it was not so difficult a thing, as you suppose, for those to whom the apostles addressed, to enter into some rational proofs of christianity. I must now add, that the assent which these divine teachers demanded, was not so immediate as you represent it to have been. You say indeed, "There were no concessions of time for doubt or deliberation; one declaration of the terms of the covenant was often thought sufficient: the least standing off gave up the unbeliever to reprobation;—they must comply without the least hesitation;" and the like. (page 38, 39.) Now I own, that if frequent positive assertions could pass for proofs, the point would be clearly demonstrated on your side of the question. But I think, the whole history of the Acts, and many things in the Epistles too, lead us to consider the matter in a very different light.

The man indeed, who on viewing such credentials as I have mentioned, and hearing so much of the gospel as in one hour he might learn, should on the force of preconceived prejudices, whether speculative or practical, refuse to give it any farther consideration, and, as some of the wits of Athens did, answer merely with scorn and ridicule, might justly be left to perish in his delusions. And if this were the case universally in any city or town into which the apostles came, (which one would hope it seldem was) the apostles must of course leave them, and not force themselves on those who rejected their pretensions with disdain. But if others received them, they generally (as I observed before,) made some stay at a place; and as they continued to teach and dispute publicly, those who at first derided, might if they pleased hear them again and again: and I can see no argument to prove, that any degree of contempt or opposition, with which any of them had at first rejected the gospel, would seal them up under reprobation, if they afterwards came to a better temper.

If these very men, as well as any others, expressed a desire of being farther instructed; if they urged their remaining doubts, not as with a proud disposition to cavil and insult, but as persons that desired farther rational satisfaction, that they might act as in the sight of God, and as answerable to him in a point of so great importance; and if they attended these enquiries with prayers for farther divine illumination, which

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teachers, as they came in their way; but it is not to be wondered at, if they lived and died in this wavering state, which was indeed a state of folly and vice, and no doubt ended accordingly. But I cannot find a line in the New Testament, which should lead one to suspect, that they would ever have it to plead before the tribunal of God, that they were condemned, for rejecting the gospel, before they had time to look into the proofs, though honestly and seriously disposed to have done it.

I have in the whole course of this argument mentioned miracles, as awakening and convincing proofs of a divine mission, without any particular regard to what you have insinuated to the contrary. (p. 46—50.) But now, Sir, I shall give it such a notice as I think it requires; which will be the less, as you seem to lay but very little stress on it yourself, and write, so far as I can judge by what follows, in a consciousness of the weakness of your own objections. You say, "they were not meant as arguments, but were natural effects of gospel-benevolence;—and plead their being used by impostors;—that care was often taken to keep them private;—and that the seeking them was discouraged." All which you would seem to think inconsistent with their being proofs, especially important proofs of the truth of the revelation. The New Testament, that grand magazine of weapons for the defence of christianity, furnishes me with such easy answers to all these suggestions, that my only fear is, lest the reader should be wearied with the illustration of things in themselves so plain, as what I have to advance in direct contradiction to all these insinuations of yours.

That the miracles which Christ and his apostles performed, were really intended by him and them, as proofs of a divine mission, is so plain from the appeals made to them, and the stress laid upon them, that it would be quite superfluous to dilate upon it here, especially after what Bishop Fleetwood, Dr. Chapman, and Mr. Chandler, have so judiciously urged on this head. Nor need any reader who has not had the pleasure of an acquaintance with those learned and accurate writers, go any farther than the texts I have thrown into the margin to prove it beyond debate*. So that the tendency of your remaining objection must be only to shew the argument, which Christ and his apostles most largely insisted upon, to be in-

* John v. 36. x. 24, 25, 37, 38. xiv. 11. xv. 24. Mark ii. 10. xvi. 20. Mat. xi. 4, 5, 20—24. Acts ii. 22. x. 38. xiv. 3. Heb ii. 4.

conclusive, and the stress laid on it unreasonable. How far the prosecution of this design is consistent with the warm zeal you profess for the gospel, it is not worth while particularly to urge. I cannot see what its greatest enemy could say, more directly tending to subvert it.

You assert, in a manner which I confess surprises me, "that miracles were but the natural effect of their doctrine, instead of any supernatural proof of its veracity." (p. 47.) I acknowledge myself quite at a loss, to find out the sense of this extraordinary passage. By a miracle we generally mean a supernatural event: now I cannot conceive, how this should be in any case, the natural effect of any doctrine, be it ever so divine, or ever so important. But if there were a doctrine, whose natural effect it was, to endow its professors or teachers with a power of performing such operations as Christ and his apostles did, it would surely be a proof of its veracity convincing beyond all dispute or comparison. However, we know not of any such doctrine; nor can we conceive of any necessary connection between a knowledge of truth, and a power of such performances. I suppose therefore your meaning must be, that when a person was endowed with these miraculous powers, the exertion of them would be what so benevolent a religion as christianity would naturally prompt him to, even though he should not intend by it to demonstrate the truth of that doctrine. But when the passage above is thus explained, which after all I can but guess to be your meaning in it; I would intreat you, Sir, to shew us, what inconsistency there is between these two views, which you have so strangely opposed to each other. Would it not be a glorious proof of a divine mission, that God gave to Christ and his apostles a power of exercising their benevolence in so extraordinary a manner? Would not miracles of a benevolent kind appear the most congruous proofs of so benevolent a scheme? And would not miracles intended as proofs of a divine mission be equally an exercise of benevolence; nay indeed, would they not be much more eminently so, than if no reference to that mission had been intended? Surely an unprejudiced mind must see the view you are guarding against, to be the crown and glory of the whole. By curing a painful and dangerous disease, by opening the eyes of the blind, and the like, to lead the afflicted creature into the way of truth and duty, and so into the way of salvation; and by this means to instruct every spectator, every one who heard the credible attestation of the fact, must enhance the benefit be-

yond all expression; extending it to a far greater variety of subjects, and, if it were duly improved, producing in each a far superior degree of happiness, than the cure alone could afford to the person who was the subject of it.

That Christ took care to conceal some of his miracles, is indeed apparent; which, to be sure, was to avoid ostentation, and to prevent the people from rising tumultuously in his favour: and that he silenced the devils who bore witness to him, was an evident instance of his wisdom, to cut off every colour for the malicious and blasphemous charge advanced against him as a confederate with them. But you well know, that many of our Lord's miracles were wrought in a most public manner; some in the streets of Jerusalem, and many more before vast multitudes who were crowding around him, in the fields, and the mountains. This is notorious. And give me leave, Sir, seriously to express my astonishment, how you could venture to say, in the face of such obvious evidence to the contrary, "that our Lord was always remarkably on the reserve in this respect, whenever he happened to be among unbelieving company." (p. 48.) A known falsehood, liable to conviction in the eyes of the whole world, is what I am very unwilling to charge upon a gentleman and a scholar, though ever so unacquainted with his person, and character. I will therefore impute this, and some other passages of this kind, to mere inattention and forgetfulness, but permit me, Sir, to say, that you ought to have read the New Testament with more accuracy, and to have fixed the contents of it more deeply in your mind, before you had thrown out so many public reflections upon it. How must it surprise and pain you, to be told from thence, and to see how plainly it is there asserted that our Lord not only *cast out devils* before the pharisees, who charged him as a confederate of Beelzebub* with that very miracle before their eyes; but likewise, that the paralytic was healed in Capernaum, while *there were pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, who were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem*†; when the power of the Lord was also present to heal several more, and the croud was so great, that the friends of the paralytic were obliged to take a very peculiar method to get him laid before Jesus! How you could fail to know this, or knowing could forget it, is strange: as also, how it should have escaped your notice or memory, that Lazarus was raised before a great multitude of people, some of which were the

* Mat. ix. 33, 34. xii. 22, 24. † Luke v. 17—19.

friends of the chief priests, and pharisees*: or that a few days before our Lord's death, when it was no longer necessary to use such precautions as he had formerly done, *the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them; and the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did*†.

But to dismiss a head, on which I could not have wished that you should have given me such advantages, I must just touch upon your other objection against the validity of the argument from miracles, taken from Christ's rebuking those that sought them. In some circumstances, it is evident that he did: but all that we can infer from hence is, that there were some circumstances, in which they were unreasonably demanded. Thus for instance, when he had *in the presence of multitudes*, (who are, by the way, expressly distinguished from his disciples,) *healed the lame, the blind, the dumb, and the maimed, and many others*, who had been *cast down at his feet*‡; and after that, had *fed four thousand, with seven loaves, and a few small fishes*§; we are immediately told, that the *Pharisees and Sadducees came tempting him, and demanded that he should shew them a sign from heaven*‖; thereby insolently taking upon them to prescribe to God himself, what kind of miracles they would have wrought for their conviction. On this he very justly called them *a wicked and adulterous generation*, and referred them (with greater propriety than most commentators have been aware,) to the grand miracle of his resurrection¶, which was attended with a most illustrious sign from heaven; the descent of an angel, in the sight of the Roman soldiers, who guarded the sepulchre; which they themselves testified to the Jewish rulers**, and perhaps to some of these very persons who now presumed on so unreasonable a demand.—He elsewhere blames those, who *would not believe, unless they saw signs and wonders*††; that is, who would not yield to the most credible testimony of others, though the witnesses were ever so numerous and worthy of belief, unless they had that of their own senses added to the rest.—It is very probable, some very indecent things had been said by his enemies while questioning with his disciples, to occasion such a severe expostulation as that, *Oh faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?* We cannot suppose, from the known candour of our Lord's character, that this was said without some peculiar reason; and as the words refer to much condescension and long-suffering

* John xi. 31—46. † Mat. xxi. 14, 15. ‡ Mat. xv. 30.
§ Mat. xv. 32—38. ‖ Mat. xvi. 1. ¶ Mat. xvi. 4.
** Mat. xxviii. 4—11. †† John iv. 48.

formerly used, in giving them much ampler satisfaction than they could strictly have demanded, so we see, that whatever insulting airs any of his enemies might have put on, when they found his disciples baffled by so stubborn a dæmon, Jesus himself rebuked him with an air of irresistible authority, and immediately cured the child in their presence and that of all the multitude*.

Now when these facts are set in this just and easy light, I leave it, Sir, to your invention, fertile as it seems, to shew how it follows as a conclusion from these premises, that our Lord judged miracles not to be proper proofs of a divine mission, and did not perform his miracles as such proofs. I shall only add, that as God never intended every individual person should be an eye witness to miraculous operations, it seems an amiable instance of wisdom and goodness, in such cases as these we have examined, as well as in that of Thomas, to check the petulancy of such, as in those days would not yield to any testimony, but that of their own senses, on such an occasion.

All that remains to be examined under this class of objections, is "what you say concerning the possibility of miracles being used by impostors." (p. 46.) This is indeed an important topic, and has been handled with that accuracy which it deserves by those who have professedly written upon it. Some persons of great eminence in the learned and christian world have so very lately examined it, that it is quite unnecessary for me to resume the controversy here: and you touch but slightly upon it, conscious as it seems, that after what they have said, it deserves little stress. I shall therefore answer, in almost as few lines as your own, only saying,—that I see no reason to believe, that the phrase lying wonders in scripture signifies, as you in your objection suppose, true miracles to confirm a lie;—and that the patrons of christianity challenge all its enemies to produce any instance of miracles wrought expressly to confirm a falsehood, which have not been immediately, and on the very spot, opposed by superior miracles on the side of truth; and these attended with such visible degrees of superiority, as to render the triumph of truth more sensible, and more illustrious, than, in those instances, it could have been without such opposition.

What follows in your 51st page, concerning the degree in which antiquity impairs the weight of miracles said to have been wrought many ages ago, has in part been obviated already; and

* Compare Mat. xvii. 17, 18. and Mark ix. 14—27.

has been so often urged by the enemies of revelation, and so largely considered by its learned defenders, that I think myself fairly dispensed with from insisting farther upon it here. I shall only add, that it must be a sensible pleasure to those that wish well to christianity, to see its opposers reduced to the wretched necessity of attacking it with such arguments, as, if they will prove any thing against it, will also prove that we can have no rational evidence of any thing that was done before we were born; or indeed, of any thing which we have not seen with our own eyes: an absurdity, which I suppose no man living can practise upon his own understanding, so far as deliberately to admit it, though infidelity can sometimes remove its mountains, and bury them in the depths of the sea.

But there is another very different medium, by which you endeavour to prove, that christianity is not founded on argument, i. e. that we are not to expect rational proof of it; which will require a larger and more particular discussion; I mean, "that we are required to believe it on so high a penalty." It seems methinks at the first proposal, that this medium is of a very extraordinary nature. One would imagine, the argument lay the contrary way: that if God required our assent to it on pain of eternal ruin and condemnation, he must have made the evidences of it very clear and strong, and such as every upright mind must be able to see the force of, on a diligent enquiry, which such minds will not fail to make. However you, Sir, are pleased to insist upon it in a contrary light, and to argue from it, that something more convincing than any argument, even an immediate revelation, must be necessary to justify such a demand.

The terms in which you urge this consideration, are so triumphant, that they rise even to insult. "With what regard, with what patience rather, can one" who expects reason for his faith, "be supposed to attend to questions propounded to him, under the restraints of threats and authority? to be talked to of danger in his decisions, and have the rod held out with the lesson? to have propositions tendered to his reason with penalties annexed?—He disdains, with all justice, an attempt equally weak and unjust, of frighting him into a compliance out of his power." (p. 8, 9.)—It would be tedious to repeat a great deal more which you say in the same strain; in which I heartily wish, that the ignorance which you seem to discover in the state of the question, may another day be allowed as some excuse for the rashness and arrogance of the language, in which you treat it; which will not universally pass for demonstration, though some may be weak enough to be carried away with the torrent.

I know indeed, that the sentence which the gospel pronounces against unbelievers has been thought by many a considerable objection against the christian scheme; on which account I the rather take this opportunity of opening my sentiments upon it, especially as I apprehend, it has often, on one side or the other, been set in a very wrong point of light.

Now here I shall not attempt to solve the supposed difficulty by pleading, that the denunciation only refers to the case of those, who should refuse to admit the testimony of the apostles, confirmed by miraculous works of which they were themselves eye-witnesses. The answer would not be allowed by you; since your objection lies against the demand in any circumstance of evidence: Nor do I indeed think the foundation of the solution just and true; since whatever reference one text in question* might have to the testimony immediately borne by the apostles, there are many others which cannot be so evaded. I chuse therefore to encounter the objection in all its force, allowing that every one who finally rejects christianity is in a *state of condemnation*, and that there *remains* for him *only a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries*†. But then I conclude, on the principles of common equity, that this only extends to those who have capacities and opportunities of enquiring into its evidences; since ignorance absolutely unavoidable is a plea so considerable, that it must have its weight before a wise and righteous God. In the instance of idiocy and lunacy, all the world allows it; and as the only reason of that seems to be, that ignorance is then unavoidable, wherever it is so, it must certainly, on the like principles, be allowed. But with these limitations I freely declare, that the sentence which the gospel passes on unbelievers, is so far from appearing any objection against christianity, that I apprehend it greatly increases its internal evidence, when taken in conjunction with the rest of the scheme; though considered alone, it would to be sure be very absurd, to pretend it to be any proof at all.

For the illustration of this, I must first remove one mistake, which seems to me a source of perpetual confusion on this head, and on which most of the confident things, which you have ventured to say on this awful subject, depend, and with which they fall to the ground; I mean, that an assent to the truth of christianity is the main thing intended by the word faith, and required under so high a penalty. On the contrary,

* Mark xvi. 16. † Heb. x. 26, 27.

nothing is more evident to me, than that (as I have largely shewn elsewhere,) faith in such passages of the New Testament as are here in question, is considered as a practical thing, which includes in it, what the word exactly expresses, an act of trust, or committing the soul to Christ, to be, under his influence and care, formed for happiness, and conducted to it, according to the method of salvation exhibited in the gospel.

It is true, indeed, a persuasion of the speculative truth of christianity must be the foundation of such a faith, but it is far from being the only, or indeed the primary property of it; nor is it that, which is chiefly referred to in these passages in question. I readily agree with you, that such an assent of the understanding, simply considered, could not without great absurdity, have been demanded under so high a penalty, or indeed under any penalty at all; and this is all, that your arguments and defiances here amount to. But if provision be made, that (excepting as above,) all to whom the gospel comes, shall on due consideration see irresistible evidence to determine that assent, they may justly be threatened with fatal consequences as unbelievers, whether that speculative assent be, or be not produced: Since it will appear, on that supposition, they have either on the one hand, notwithstanding fair and solemn warning, criminally omitted taking those measures which would infallibly and necessarily have produced a conviction of the truth; or on the other hand, being convinced of it, have acted contrary to what they knew in their own consciences that reason and duty required.

Taking the matter in this view, it may perhaps seem so clear, that some of my readers may wonder I should pursue it any farther: Yet as you lay so great a stress on this supposed difficulty, and as so many other persons have seemed shocked with it, and some (as I have been informed,) have carried it so far as to reject christianity, because they were threatened with damnation if they did not believe it, I will more particularly open to you that view of things, which convinces me that these damnatory sentences increase, rather than weaken, the internal evidence of that gospel, to which they are annexed. And here I shall more particularly shew, first,—that there is not in the general any absurdity, in supposing such a sentence may attend a revelation from God; and then,—that there is a peculiar propriety in it, when connected with such a sort of revelation as christianity in other respects appears to be.

For the illustration of the first of these, I would desire you,

Sir, calmly to consider, whether it be in the nature of things absolutely impossible, that an infinitely wise God should contrive such evidence of the truth of a revelation, as should be sufficient to convince every honest enquirer, who is capable of exercising reason in the common affairs of life; and such only are here in question. Can a mathematician invent a demonstration, which almost every one of a common genius shall with due application infallibly understand; and cannot the great Former of the human spirit find out a way of effecting the like, by a proof of another kind? Or if no one argument which omniscience could furnish out, can have such an universal effect, (which I think it would be great petulancy and folly to assert,) could not this wise and glorious being exhibit a complication of arguments so adjusted, that some one of them at least should be suited to strike every such enquirer, and to convince him? Nay, to bring the matter yet lower, when a strong complication of various arguments is provided, is it absolutely impossible, that an all comprehending mind should contrive a scheme of providence, in consequence of which every sincere and honest enquirer should, either by some external occurrence, (as meeting with a book, or friend, in some critical moment of doubt or danger) or by some inward impression, (his thoughts being fixed and guided, as it seems to him, in a natural way, and without any particular revelation,) be led into such views of the evidence as shall engage his assent; while at the same time, a mind under the strong force of vicious prejudices shall be left to harden itself against opening proofs, to turn away from the increasing light, and to aggravate trifling objections, till it utterly rejects a most salutary scheme? I ask you, Sir, and I ask every reader, whether you, or he, will venture so to limit an all-wise and almighty being, as to say, that it is absolutely impossible he should adjust matters, as on any one of the three former suppositions? But if you cannot say, and prove it to be so, then be pleased with me to reflect on the consequence of supposing any one of these to be a possible case.

On such a supposition, I would farther ask you, whether it would not be just with God, to condemn those who should reject a revelation attended with evidence so adjusted and supported? that is, on this hypothesis, to condemn persons who through vicious prejudices should refuse an upright and candid enquiry into the truth, and perhaps into the evidence of it, attended with some circumstances which tend powerfully to strike the mind, and awaken examination and attention? I see not, how the justice of this could be denied on any principle,

which will not infer, that God cannot punish any vice of a sinner's mind, or any irregularity of his life, and will consequently overthrow natural religion.

Let us then imagine, in hypothesis at least, (since it appears no impossibility,) the evidence adjusted as above, and the resolution of punishing the infidel formed; I would farther ask, whether in such a circumstance it was, or could be, unworthy the divine being to declare such a purpose and resolution? Some valuable ends, which might be answered by such a declaration are obvious enough. It could not indeed convince any man's understanding, that the doctrine so inforced was true; and I do not know that any one was ever weak enough to pretend it: But it might in some degree awaken the attention of an enquirer; since though he could not believe the threatning, till he discerned the evidence of that revelation of which it made a part, yet he would easily see, that if it should indeed prove true, it must be a truth of vast importance; and would also see, that whatever degrees of probability appeared to be in its favour when first proposed, there must be equal degrees of probability that he would be miserable in consequence of rejecting it. Besides, this declaration might excite the persons employed to publish the revelation of which it made a part, to act with greater ardour and spirit, and to suffer with greater courage and resolution, when they knew that the happiness of mankind was so intimately concerned in it. It might also awaken in all who embraced this revelation, a concern to keep it pure and unmingled with any thing, which by a wrong association of ideas might occasion a prejudice against it, whether from the absurdity of its supposed doctrines, or the immorality of those who received and maintained it; since such prejudices might prove so fatal. Now each of these appears to me a very important end, of which many objectors against this part of christianity seem to be very little apprised*.

* Agreeable to what I have said above, of the various use of such threatnings, it may be observed, that many of those passages of the New Testament which express the divine purpose of punishing the rejectors of christianity, are not immediately addressed to unbelievers, (though they are at other times, as was very reasonable, solemnly warned;) but to those who were to be preachers of the gospel, whom therefore (if any such read this passage,) I beseech and intreat in the bowels of Christ seriously to consider them. Thus it is, in his charge to the twelve apostles, (Mat. x. 15.) and to the seventy disciples, (Luke x. 12.) that our Lord represents unbelievers as certainly devoted to so dreadful a destruction, that it should be *more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them.* And it is to his apostles also,

On the other hand, Sir, if no such threatnings were annexed, and the purpose of God to execute his deserved displeasure on the rejecters of this revelation, should at length take place, would not the unhappy creature have room to make some such reflection as this, when he was plunging into a final destruction? "Why was not I *admonished* of the *danger of unbelief* in such a case as this? When so many other things were declared, and so many other messages sent, why was not this one article added, by the messengers who brought the rest?" Now though conscience might tell such a wretch, that every vicious prejudice was penal, and that if mercy were indeed offered and slighted, the consequence must be dangerous and fatal; yet it seems congruous to the divine wisdom and goodness, to foreclose such a plea as this, even in the mouth of a perishing sinner.

On this view I hope it will appear not incredible in hypothesis and speculation, that a revelation might come from God, the evidence of which should be so adjusted, that all who have an opportunity of examining into it might be required to receive and submit to it, on pain of God's highest displeasure; though you, Sir, have been pleased to paint this as a supposi-

that, when risen from the dead, he says, just after a commission to *go and preach the gospel to every creature*, (Mark xvi. 16.) *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he* THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL BE DAMNED. Many passages of the same purport in the epistles are addressed to christians, no doubt with the same general view of awakening their compassionate efforts to deliver those wretched creatures who were in such extreme danger. Compare 2 Thess. i. 7—9. 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. and Jude, ver. 23.

I must also take the liberty to add, that there seems to me a very beautiful propriety in the manner of our Lord's expressing several of these denunciations, which is not in a direct, but an oblique form; which particularly became that gracious messenger of the divine love, who visited the world, *not to condemn* but *to save it*. Thus the awful doom of Capernaum and Bethsaida is uttered by Christ, not when speaking to them, but when distant from them, in the form of a lamentation over them. (Mat. xi. 20—24. So likewise is Jerusalem lamented over, as abandoned to destruction for its incorrigible and perverse infidelity, once when Christ was as far off as Galilee, (Luke xiii. 34, 35.) and afterwards, when only approaching, and beholding it from Mount Olivet (Luke xix. 41, 42.) And this last time the ruin was predicted in broken language, and with a flow of tears; expressing on the one hand, the benevolence of our Lord's temper, which engaged him to mourn over the justest condemnation which sinners could bring on themselves; and on the other, the inevitable certainty, and unutterable terror of that destruction, which was coming upon them. It is one instance among a thousand, of that fine spirit which runs through all our Lord's behaviour; and which renders it astonishing, that his cause should meet with such malignant opposition among many who set up for critics in the TO ΠΡΕΠΟΝ, and the TO ΚΑΛΟΝ, the decorum, and the beauty of actions. I have known a criminal touched, and even charmed, with the tenderness which a judge has shewn in passing a capital sentence upon him; and I wonder, it should not be the case here.

tion in itself flagrantly absurd. Nay I apprehend, it must follow from these principles, that the very supposition of a revelation in general implies, on the one hand, sufficiency of evidence to every candid enquirer; and on the other, certain divine displeasure against the rejecters of it, which if not expressly declared, will at least be implied.

But how far this is from a real absurdity, may farther appear by viewing the matter in an opposite light. Let me imagine, a man should profess to bring me a divine revelation with great solemnity; and yet at the same time should declare, that I might reject it without any danger. I know not how others might judge, but I am sure this would appear to me so incoherent, that I should hardly give myself the trouble of enquiring into his credentials, unless some very striking circumstance appeared at the first view. For it would be natural to conclude, it may be true, or it may be false: And if it be true, by the confession of the messenger I have no great concern in it; I may be happy, without paying any regard to it: It is therefore comparatively a trifling concern, and by consequence so much less likely to be the subject of a divine interposition.

Take it therefore in any light, and it appears to me, that an obligation on some high penalty to enquire into credentials, and by consequence to receive and obey the command, is in the nature and reason of things to be supposed as the counterpart of the honour of receiving a message from God; and, as the law speaks, *transit cum onere*, it comes to a man (if I may be allowed the expression,) with this awful incumbrance, "He must *reject it at his peril.*" And agreeably to this remark, we always find, (so far as I can recollect,) through the whole series of the Old Testament, that where the message sent from God was disregarded, some signal punishment was inflicted on the person to whom it was addressed; which I mention, not as arguing from it, but as a circumstance illustrating in one view the reasonings above, and in another receiving illustration from them.

These, Sir, are the principles, on which I said above, that threatnings against those who should disbelieve and reject a revelation in question, are so far from being any argument against its being reasonable and divine, as some have vainly pretended; that on the contrary, they are so suitable to a wisely concerted scheme, that the omission of them would rather be an objection against a pretended revelation, than any argument in its favour.

I shall beg leave, Sir, to detain you a little longer on this

head, while I attempt to shew that these reasonings, which appear of general force have a peculiar and singular weight when applied to christianity: Which will appear from considering the degrees of evidence to which it pretends; and several other circumstances attending the scheme itself, and the manner in which it was introduced into the world.

I have discoursed at large already on the kind of evidence with which christianity was attended, during the ministry of Christ and his apostles, and have referred to several passages, in which the rejection of it is charged on such vicious prejudices, as must render men highly criminal before God; and some other passages to the same purpose may be seen in the margin*. I shall only add here, that I apprehend, our blessed Lord (who said nothing in vain, and in whose short sentences there is often a weight far beyond what the generality of his enemies, or his followers, have considered,) seems expressly to have asserted the most extraordinary of all the suppositions made above to be fact; I mean that of a divine superintendency over every well disposed mind, to lead it into the evidences of the truth of his doctrine. And this, you will observe, he hath spoken in terms suiting not only the period of his own, or the apostles ministry, but future ages too. You will perhaps, from this general hint, recollect that important passage† ; *If any man will do his will*, i. e. the will of my father, εαν τις θελη ποιειν, "if he be resolutely determined upon it," (as I have elsewhere observed the phrase plainly signifies‡) *he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* And the prophet Isaiah seems long before to have represented the matter much in the same view, though according to his manner, in more figurative terms; when he says, *an high way shall be there; and it shall be called the way of holiness; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein*§.

I might also shew at large, if I were not afraid of running out this letter to too great a length, that not only those degrees of evidence to which christianity pretends, but also several other circumstances attending the scheme itself, and the manner in which it was introduced into the world, render the threatnings annexed peculiarly suitable to it, beyond the degrees in which they might, on the principles above, have suited a revelation in these respects different from the gospel.

* Acts xiii. 46. xviii. 6. Rom. ii. 8, 9. 2 Cor. iv 3, 4. 1 Thess ii. 14—16. 2 Thess. i. 6—9. ii. 10—12. Heb. iii. 7—13. vi. 7, 8. 1 John, v. 19.

† John vii. 17. ‡ See Family-Expositor. § Isai. xxxv. 8.

It is very material for the illustration of this point, to recollect that the christian scheme supposes mankind under guilt, and obnoxious on account of it to misery, to dreadful final misery; and accordingly makes its proposals, not merely under the notion of a benefit, but of a remedy; of a remedy without which men were perishing. Now the necessary consequence of this must be, the death and destruction of those who reject it. In this view the sacred writers, with great propriety, sometimes place it. *God sent his Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish*;—and therefore *he that believeth not on him, is condemned already, because he hath not believed**: It plainly appears from his unbelief, that he is actually under sentence; and as it follows afterwards, *the wrath of God*, that wrath from which he might otherwise have been saved and rescued, *abideth on him*†. And to this purpose Christ declares elsewhere. *If you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins*‡, shall perish with the guilt of all those transgressions on your heads, from which I was so sincerely willing to have delivered you.

The threatnings in question are also congruous to the importance of those blessings, which are offered to all who embrace and obey the gospel. These are well known in speculation; but, were they duly considered, they would appear to have much greater weight than many are aware. A full pardon of all the most aggravated sins, which the true penitent has ever committed; the communication of divine influences, to enable us to conquer the power of sin to which we were inslaved, and to fit us for happiness present and future; an admission into the family of God, and a participation of all the joys and privileges of his children; the reception of our separate spirits into the presence of God, and to the most glorious society, enjoyments, and services there; and at length, the resurrection of our bodies, and the eternal happiness of the whole man: Such favours offered to condemned sinners by the offended Majesty of heaven and earth, must certainly have drawn after them severe punishments on the presumptuous creatures by whom they were slighted and despised, had they been notified and proposed by the meanest inhabitant of the celestial world, or even of our own, as an ambassador from God. But when to all this it is added, that a person so glorious, so excellent, and so divine as the Son of God himself, *his only begotten Son*, became the messenger of his father's love and grace to us; and that he might

* John iii. 16. 18. † John iii. 36. ‡ John viii. 24.

testify it in a more effectual manner, became also, for many succeeding years, an inhabitant of our low world; and at length submitted to such extreme evils, even to death itself, to a death attended with such astonishing circumstances of ignominy and torture, for this great reason among others, that he might affect our minds with powerful sentiments of religious veneration, of gratitude and love; who can wonder, if there be an awful counterpart to all these miracles of condescension and mercy? Who can wonder, if the contempt of such a gospel, so circumstantiated, and so sealed, be penal in proportion to the degree in which it is criminal? Can it possibly be imagined, that the Son of God should become incarnate, and bleed, and die; and that his spirit should afterwards be sent down from heaven, with all that splendid apparatus of various languages instantaneously taught, and miraculous powers every where exerted; and all this to make way for a discovery, which those to whom it was sent might trample upon with impunity? that they might reject and deride it themselves, and perhaps make it almost the only serious business of their lives, to expose it to universal contempt; and yet, though living and dying impenitent, partake in the day of final retribution, with that Redeemer whom they have rejected and opposed, in the joys he will bestow on his faithful servants, and which he will share with them? This, Sir, is such a shocking incongruity even in hypothesis, that you yourself could not forbear exploding it; and I think you have done it with great propriety and spirit. (p. 45.) It is indeed as you represent it: The least intimation of mercy to the finally unbelieving and impenitent would have been a blemish on the whole scheme, and a kind of toleration for that neglect, which in such a case it would probably have met with in the world. Whereas it is now with the most becoming Majesty, that such a dispensation of wonders terminates in a day, when this humbled and dishonoured Saviour shall appear *in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ; who shall* therefore *be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power**.

Permit me only to touch on one consideration more, which illustrates the congruity of these denunciations, as a part of the gospel scheme; and that is, the difficulties through which that scheme was to struggle in its early infancy. It was wisely ordered by providence for the establishment and edification of succeeding ages, that the first professors of christianity should

* 2 Thess. i. 8, 9.

encounter great hardships and sufferings on account of it; and it would be easy to shew, that a scheme calculated for universal reformation may expose to such trials, when it made its entrance into so degenerate a world. Now in this view there was an evident necessity, that *the fear of him, who after he had killed could cast both soul and body into hell**, should be opposed to the threats of cruel persecutors. It was necessary, that the danger of rejecting, deserting, or even dissembling the faith should be plainly and affectionately represented; otherwise men would have held themselves fairly dispensed with from enquiring and looking into a scheme, so likely to prove destructive to their fortunes, and even to their lives, in this world, and by its own confession, by no means necessary to avoid greater evils in another.

From all these reasonings it appears to me undeniably evident, that as some severe threatnings to those who reject it must probably in any case attend a divine revelation; so these threatnings are so evidently congruous to the peculiar nature, design, and circumstances of christianity, that had they not made a part of it, the absence of them would have been a great diminution to its internal evidence, and probably an effectual bar to its propagation in the world.

I am sensible, Sir, the grand objection against all these reasonings is taken, from the appearance of a virtuous and amiable disposition in some who disbelieve the gospel, and from the possibility that a wrong association of ideas in others, leading them to conclude those things to be contained in the christian revelation which do not indeed belong to it, may engage some to reject the whole from the apparent absurdity which they see in these spurious, though solemn additions to it; as for instance, in those vast tracts of land, in which transubstantiation and image worship are represented, not merely as consistent with christianity, but as in a manner essential to it, by those who are its established teachers, and may therefore be presumed best to understand it.

As for the latter of these cases, it must be considered, how far the person so mistaken in the idea he has formed of christianity has fallen into that mistake necessarily, and how far it may be charged on his own negligence or mismanagement. It is possible, that in some countries christianity may be so misrepresented, and the common people may be so utterly incapable of

* Matt. x. 28.

coming at its true contents, that they may be looked upon as persons unavoidably ignorant of it; and consequently are not included in the number of those, whose case we are now considering. But if any may have recourse to the scriptures, and will not give themselves the trouble of searching them, to see whether these supposed absurd doctrines are really contained in them, or no, they must stand by the consequences of their indolence and rashness: And I fear, the nobility and gentry in popish countries, (who are the persons among whom deism probably prevails most,) are generally in this case. Such might easily have discovered so much good in christianity, and so many arguments in its favour, as might have proved it worth their while to have read over the New Testament again and again, with an honest desire of knowing what are indeed the doctrines and precepts contained in it. I question not, but such an employment would have been a much more rational and useful way of spending time, than what the persons in question have often preferred to it; and it is not so obscure, as to leave a candid reader in such a case capable of imagining, it teaches, or requires any thing absurd.

As for the supposed virtues of some who know the gospel and reject it, I fear, Sir, when they come to be tried by the great standard of true excellence in character, they will be found exceedingly deficient. Virtue is a word of a very dubious signification; and, as it is generally used, that man is denominated virtuous, who is temperate, just, and humane in his conduct, be he never so destitute of religion. Now with regard to such persons it is evident, that a wise and righteous God will never treat them, as if they had been debauched, unjust, and inhumane. Nevertheless, if such as these live *without God in the world*; if they *cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God*; if (which the very fact of their rejecting christianity proves,) they will not set themselves to enquire diligently and impartially into the intimations of the divine will; if they are unhumbled before God for the various transgressions of their lives, and so proudly conceited of their own reasonings, that they will set their preconceived opinions on particular subjects against all the weight of internal and external evidence attending the christian revelation, when contradicting those opinions; I cannot see on what ground they can complain, if they be finally treated as persons, who, while they have reverenced men, have forgotten God: Nor can it be imagined, that, under the load of so much guilt, they will have any claim to future rewards merely because they have had sense and good

nature enough, to judge rightly concerning what would generally be the best interests and enjoyments of human life, even if there were no Deity; and so have chosen to live like men rather than brutes, so far as sobriety and mutual kindness alone were in question.

Had the best of men a suitable and continual sense of the majesty and purity of the divine nature, and of that love, duty, and zeal, which a reasonable creature owes to its Creator, they would with all their human and social virtues about them, fall down into the dust before God, and say, *Enter not into judgment with thy servants, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified**! and they would feel a load of guilt pressing on their consciences, and engaging them most attentively to listen to a scheme by which free and full pardon might be expected, in a way most honourable to the rights of divine government. And if no admonitions can bring those who are now insensible to such a temper, we can only lament, that their conviction is delayed to so late, and probably to so fatal a day.

But if there be any where in a christian and protestent nation, a man not yet thoroughly convinced of christianity, who on the principles of natural religion, reverences and loves the great Author of his being; who pours out his soul before him in the exercise of private and public devotion; who humbly traces every intimation of his will which he has already received, that he may yield a constant and uniform obedience to it; and seeks illumination from the great Father of lights for the farther discovery of it: If there be a person, who though yet in the state of hesitation concerning the divine authority of the scriptures, will diligently search them, not with a view to cavil and object, but honestly to see what is the genius and design of them, and will also read and consult the ablest defenders of christianity, in order to gain a fuller information of its evidence; I will venture to pronounce, that such a man is *not far from the kingdom of God*, and doubt not, but that according to the declaration of our faithful Saviour, he will ere long *know that the doctrine is of God*†. I cannot believe that such a one ever died an infidel; because I have abundantly stronger evidence that christianity is true, than I have of the virtue of any one who died denying it. But you well know, Sir, that the generality of our deists are quite out of the present question, being most of them such as a Roman censor would not

* Psal. cxliii. 2. † John vii. 17.

have borne in any of the highest ranks of their citizens, how eagerly soever any may plead for their admission into the New Jerusalem, the presence of God, and the mansions of the blessed.

Nevertheless it is possible some may object, with regard to the person, whom we described above, as making so hopeful a progress towards embracing the gospel, what will he be the better after all, when it is embraced? What can the single circumstance of believing christianity to be true, effect towards recommending a man to the divine favour, who is already supposed not only temperate, just, and benevolent, but devout too? This is a question which I have sometimes heard advanced, though I do not recollect that you mention it; but I wonder it should enter into any mind, who knows what the faith which constitutes a man a real christian is, according to the account given of it above, agreeable to the whole tenour of the New Testament: And by the way, had you, Sir, considered that, you would have found very little room to triumph (as you do, page 10.) in our being obliged to pray for its increase. Were it merely a speculative assent, your arguments on this head would be as conclusive, as they are foreign to the scripture idea of it; which is *a cordial and practical acquiescence in the scheme of salvation by Christ.* This, Sir, evidently includes in it a becoming affection towards the Son of God, that illustrious person, whom, venerable and amiable as he is, every infidel must necessarily neglect, and to whom, when once revealed, God may most reasonably require express homage, duty, and subjection, on pain of his highest displeasure. Faith also, in this view of it, will be the foundation of such deep humiliation before God, of such ardent love to him, and does, in one word, so illustriously ennoble, and improve, all the other branches of a lovely and virtuous disposition; that surely no one, who has either felt its power, or even studied its nature and genuine influence, can long doubt to what purpose it is demanded and insisted upon. And he that has observed the effects it has produced, and the illustrious as well as numerous victories it has gained over the world, beyond what any other principle could ever obtain, will be unable to depreciate it, without greatly debasing the nature and extent of that moral virtue, which he pretends to exalt in preference to it; as I think it were easy to shew at large, if the compass of this letter would admit it.

And thus, Sir, I have given you my deliberate thoughts on the reasonableness, justice, and necessity of the awful sentence which the gospel passes on those who reject it; and whether it may move you to gratitude, to anger, or to scorn, I cannot dis-

miss the subject without solemnly and earnestly intreating you, seriously to reflect upon it, as your own concern, and to ask yourself, as an impartial creature shortly to appear at the tribunal of God, whether you have not reason to humble yourself before him in the review of this, when compared with the manner in which you have ventured to talk on this tremendous subject? Your heart may perhaps be less impressible; but I am sure that for my own part, were I to think, I will not say as an humble christian, but as a sober and religious deist in character ought, if christianity had never been heard of, I would not for the whole world presume to say, as you have in effect frequently done, that an infinitely wise God could not give a revelation attended with such rational evidence, as should render every man to whom it came*, justly obnoxious to high penalties for rejecting it." Nay, I think it would fill me with astonishment and grief, that a mortal man should be found, arrogant and petulant enough, to limit the majesty of heaven, by such an assertion; and to declare in express words, a disdain at the mention of his lifted rod, when held over those who should despise his appointed method of pardon and salvation. May the hour never come, when this ill-judged bravery shall be lamented amidst inconsolable horrors!

After so copious an examination of this important question, in which I have laboured to give you, and my other readers, all the satisfaction I could, I have not left myself room to mention many other things in your essay, which might admit and require animadversion. Of those yet remaining unhandled, your account of the agency and office of the divine Spirit seems the most considerable. I leave my reader to consult it for himself, as it stands in your 56th and following pages: In which he will find a mixture of truth and falsehood so blended together, as on the whole to amount to a scheme apparently contrary to fact; and in theory so wild, that he will not find it easy to believe, it could be seriously proposed by any who enjoyed the use of his reason; or that you in particular meant any thing by it, unless it were to expose christianity, by representing this as its doctrine, and its grand foundation.

You must at least, Sir, add the sanction of your name to your pamphlet, before you will be thought seriously to teach, (as in page 59.) "that every baptized person is inspired in a moment with an *irresistible light from heaven*," which yet, according to your 63d page, may be resisted, and

* N. B. I here suppose extraordinary cases allowed for, as above.

thereby make infidelity criminal; "a light, by which our faith is completed in an instant, the most perfect and finished creed produced at once, and made self-evident to the mind in which it is lodged, in a way perhaps little differing from intuition itself; such characters being stamped upon the heart, as no misrepresentations can ever possibly intervene to corrupt, no succeeding suggestions of a different style, to dispute the preference, or shake its authority in the mind." In one word, "we are" in consequence of this extraordinary operation, (if we are to take the matter as you represent it,) "brought under a monitor and guardian, which does not leave us for one moment liable to a possibility of error and imposition." These, Sir, are your own words; and if any reader, to whom I am personally a stranger, should question whether any thing so absurd as the last clause is any where in the world to be found, your 60th page will convince him how faithfully they are transcribed.

I apprehend, perhaps with you, that merely to propose this notion, is to confute it. However for the credit of the christian world, I am glad to say, it is no very common one, and may, for any thing I at present know, be quite peculiar; whatever unguarded approaches some good men may have made towards it, or whatever airs of infallibility they may have assumed, which to do you justice, I cannot but imagine, you meant by all this gallimatia to expose. It would be an easy matter to vindicate the scriptures, which you have pressed in to support this strange representation; but every good commentary upon them may furnish the reader with an antidote against such an interpretation, if his own reflections do not (as might reasonably be expected,) immediately supersede the necessity of having recourse to any commentary at all. I shall not therefore at present pursue the matter any farther; but leave you to be confuted, I will not say by every rational christian writer on this subject, but even by every error which any good christian has fallen into, on this head, or on any other; for every such error as effectually confutes this notion, as a thousand volumes of the strictest argument could do it.

Nevertheless, Sir, if you still continue to urge the matter, and the public seem desirous of it, I may perhaps take this your third general under as particular a consideration, as your two former. In the mean time, I am well satisfied, that none who knows me will imagine, that I have declined the task from any suspicions which I entertain concerning the reality or importance of the *operations of the blessed Spirit* on the mind to

enlighten and renew, to sanctify and strengthen, to cheer and to guide the *children of God*, and the *heirs of glory*. I am continually bearing my testimony to this great and weighty truth in my sermons and writings; as I can never expect, that any course of preaching or writing should be useful to the souls of men, in which so glorious a doctrine of christianity is either denied or omitted.

There are many other particulars in your letter, about which I shall have no controversy with you at all, but shall willingly leave those deities to plead, whose altars you have cast down. The imputation of the faith of sureties to the baptized infant;—the necessary connection between the administration of that rite, and the communication of some extraordinary influences of the spirit;—the power of the magistrate to determine articles of faith, and to impose forms of worship by sanguinary laws, or laws in any lower degree penal;—the compelling young persons to declare their sentiments on some of the nicest theological controversies, before they can be supposed at all to have examined them,—and frowning severely upon them, as soon as they appear to suspect, what they never had any convincing evidence to engage them to believe:—These, and some other particulars (which lie between the 95th and 101st page of your book,) I confess you have rallied with a just severity. And I am particularly pleased with the serious air with which the raillery on these heads is carried, even to the defence of fire and faggot in the cause of religion; from which I presume, Sir, you apprehend yourself to be in no danger. It will, no doubt, be of service to those readers, who, without such a key, might, in the simplicity of their hearts, have been led into a wrong judgment of your views, from those airs of devotion and orthodoxy, which you assume in other passages.

A design to overthrow natural religion, as well as revealed; to confound the nature of virtue and vice, and subvert, so far as a mortal can do it, the throne of God among men; to destroy all the foundations of truth, justice, and benevolence, which arise from a persuasion of his divine presence and providence, leaving us to all the absurdities, the temptations, and miseries of atheism; is so black, and so horrid an enormity, that I would by no means charge it, by any train of consequences, even on a nameless author. And indeed I will not allow myself so much as to think, that you were capable of setting yourself about it, as our law expresses it in matters of much less importance, knowingly and with malice forethought. Charity teaches me rather to hope, that it was in mere sport, and wantonness of heart, you

have thrown about these *fire-brands, arrows, and death*[*]. But what the sport has been, the weapons themselves shall shew: And whatever you meant, I think it my duty, before I conclude, to shew, that you have in fact, laid the foundation of the temple of confusion, (if I may be allowed the expression,) and pointed out the way to the utter destruction of religion, in every form, and in every degree. I hope therefore, Sir, that how ungrateful soever the subject may be, you will give me a patient hearing, while I spend a few moments in the illustration of it; partly lest some unthinking people, dazzled by the sophistry of your boasted arguments, should implicitly follow you, *not knowing whither they go;* and partly, as I insinuated in the entrance of my former letter, that I apprehended your pamphlet had such a tendency; for I should think I acted unworthy my character as a christian and a divine, if I left such an insinuation entirely unsupported. And indeed, Sir, if your pamphlet has those views, which (so far as I can learn) are universally imputed to it, I should hope nothing might be more likely to convince you of the weakness of those arguments, by which you attempt to shake the foundation of christianity, than to shew you, that if they prove any thing, they prove a great deal too much; prove, what I hope you would abhor, as infinitely the most pernicious of all falsehoods.

In order, if possible, to make you sensible of this, give me leave to suppose an atheist, or if that be too great a monster to be supposed, a sceptic, who has, and will have, no fixed sentiments in religion of any kind, addressing himself to you, or to some patron of natural religion, on your own principles, and in many of your own words, to some such purpose as this.

"It is a most absurd thing, so much as to pretend to offer any defence of religion, so far as even to argue the existence of a deity from the works of nature, or to go about to prove that we lie under any obligations to sobriety, honesty, or mutual kindness. If such disputes as these be allowed, there is no ensuring conviction. (p. 5.) If the motives, even to these virtues, may be examined and considered, they may be innocently rejected; for who shall ascertain the moment when I am to become virtuous, if I am allowed to examine why I am to be so? (p. 93.) Your boasted rational evidence of these things is a false unwarranted notion, without the least ground to support it in nature. (p. 7.) You say, all men are to think alike upon these topics, all to acknowledge, there is an original, intellectual being,

[*] Prov. xxvi. 18, 19.

endowed with all natural and moral perfections, and that all the rules of virtue and duty are to be inviolably observed: But how should these reasons of yours, whatever they are, and which therefore I will not condescend so much as to hear, produce this unity of opinion in these important articles? I disdain to bestow a second thought on so preposterous a scheme. (p. 8.) Tell me not, that by neglecting to enquire into the existence of a God, and thereby running into an utter disregard to all that gratitude, veneration, and obedience, which, you say, I owe him, I may incur his displeasure; or that by refusing to enquire into the nature and obligations of virtue, I may incur a thousand other inconveniences;—I cannot have patience to be threatned into consequences, to be talked to of danger in decisions, and to have the rod held out with the lesson. (ibid.) It is impossible, there should be any such thing as rational religion; for if it be necessary at all, it must be equally necessary for all men, and at all times. Children must love and fear the Deity, before they could know any thing of him: and their knowledge, if built upon such principles as these you offer me, would come quite too late to regulate the practice. (p. 13.) You say, you find religion reasonable in speculation; but I tell you, in your own words, that is nothing to the purpose: The question is, Whether I, and every man, be bound to believe it? (p. 18.) And who can imagine this, who considers how few men are qualified for reasoning; (p. 17.) and how possible it is, that if the examination of these things were to be attempted, a man might not live long enough to go through with the proof? (ibid.) What if it be indeed so, that the perfections of the Deity, and the obligations of virtue, may be rationally demonstrated; yet you know, the generality of apprehensions extend not beyond a simple proposition, and are thrown out at once at the very mention of a medium: (ibid.) Nay the very ablest and best of men are (as you have taught me,) disqualified for fair reasoning, by their natural prejudices. We atheists have contracted a partiality for particular objects and notions, familiarized to us by long acquaintance: An honest and natural fondness for Hobbes, and Spinoza, and the rest of our old friends, will never permit us to exert our judgments in a disinterested manner; not to say, how many of the living may be concerned in the event." (p. 23.)

"Besides," might your atheistical or sceptical disciple say, "it is an immense task you would assign me, a task for which years will not suffice, to run through all the acute and metaphysical writers, masters in Israel, who have each of them had their

darling argument, and have many of them perhaps written whole folios to illustrate it. Or if you would lead me to quit the high priori road, (without examining which, it is nevertheless plain that I can have no full idea of the subject,) and would argue from second causes and the harmony of nature, how can I judge of this without understanding the laws of nature? and how can I attain the knowledge of those laws, but by a deep and long attention to mathematical studies? As I must take the faith of a Deity in the way to complete virtue, according to your circular argument, that *he who comes to God, must believe that he is;* (p. 78.) so I must also take Sir Isaac Newton's Principia, after a great many other preparatory books, in the way to that faith. And however the gentlemen of the Boylean lecture, on whom you so pleasantly exercise your talent of raillery, may confine their hearers to examine only into the evidence on one side of the question; I hope you, Sir, will give me leave to hear, what my brethren, the atheists and fatalists, have said to destroy religion, as well as what its votaries have said in its defence.

"Now," may he proceed to say, "if by some happy conjunction of circumstances, I have genius and learning, and resolution, and leisure, and fortune enough, to go through this Encyclopædia of Ethical and Physico Theological Studies, it is not the happiness of one in a thousand; and yet according to you, natural religion and morality are matters of universal concern. And which is worst of all, when I have finished this course, in some future distant period of life, if I happen to attain it, the event of this examination is quite uncertain. Perhaps all my labour may be lost, and I may find myself obliged to sit down in my present infidelity; or if I attain to any notions of these things, they may be *changeable with every wind of doctrine.* (p. 26.) Nay, if I continue to believe, my faith will administer no comfort in the reflection; for I shall continually forget the fundamental principles, on which I have formed my determination; (p. 29.) and even while I remember them, my faith will never influence my practice. (p. 13.) You," may this importunate echo of your philosophy and wisdom retort, "you, who have studied what virtue is, tell me it will require me to deny my appetites, and to bridle my passions: But what will all these principles (even the rational apprehensions of the presence of God himself, a view to his favour, and the expectation of immortality) do, when weighed in the scale against demonstrative good, (p. 32.) i. e. the pleasures of sense, and the ties of secular interest? The most valuable reversion is but of small regard, when compared with that which is actually before us.

To what purpose then should I lavish away my time, my labour, and my substance, to build a vessel, which, even while you offer me the plan of it, you tell me will founder in the first storm, if it be not saved by miracle."

And now, Sir, arise and plead the injured cause of God and virtue, against all this train of wretched sophistry; and I will venture to say, that the arguments, and the distinctions, by which you confute the atheist, shall be your own answer. You would not, for shame, acknowledge that he reasoned justly, in a speech like this, which I, or rather yourself, have put into his mouth. You would not urge him, to throw up all thoughts of the reasons and evidences of natural religion, and to wait "till he be inspired in a moment with an *irresistible light from heaven*, by which his faith should be completed in an instant, a perfect creed produced at once, and made self-evident to the mind, in a way little different from intuition." (p. 59.) I charitably believe you would think the subject too serious for such kind of jargon, and forgetting your harangue to your Oxonian friend, you would gravely inculcate very different principles.

You would, no doubt shew your antagonist, that he talked in a very crude and indigested manner, and confounded things, which should by all means be carefully distinguished, and indeed are very easily distinguishable.—You would then to be sure own, and urge, that all mankind are capable of some reasoning, unless they be lunatics or idiots, who are confessedly out of the present question; and that the great proofs of religion are so plain, that a few words, and a little time and labour, may clear them beyond all reasonable objections.—You would remind him, that common sense might teach him in general to distinguish between what is essential, and what is merely circumstantial in an argument, and might find out a medium between being exquisitely learned in the history of controversies relating to the Deity, and utterly unacquainted with any reason for believing his existence.—You would tell him, that the great Author of nature, having given him some hints of his being and perfections, (which the very questioning of them, or even the denial, would prove he in fact had,) might justly require, that he should seriously and candidly weigh at least the most obvious proofs; which, if he did he would undoubtedly see his obligations to believe and practise accordingly. And when he urged the inefficacy of these persuasions to influence his practice, you would perhaps add, before you were

well aware,—that if a rational creature could commit such an outrage upon reason, as to rush on to prohibited gratifications, in the apprehended presence of God, and at the known expence of his favour, he must charge the fatal consequence on himself alone; and might in the mean time be ashamed to confess himself so mean a slave to every irregular propensity of appetite and passion, and to talk of the demonstrative good of those baits, which he knew in his own conscience to be the instruments of final destruction.

In short, Sir, not to swell this recapitulation, into which I am thus accidentally fallen, to the length that you have yourself given. (p. 109—111.) I think you must answer him by the very same considerations, which I urged in my former letter, when replying to you, and by consequence must confute yourself. And as one who knows the importance of the matter, and wishes nothing more sincerely than to see you extricated from these labyrinths of sophistry and error, I do now beseech you, that you would enter into your own conscience, while the matter stands in this point of light, and ask yourself, how you could possibly on your own principles reply to this enemy of natural religion? I dare say, the public would be pleased to see, how you would manage the debate. But if you could not defend even natural religion without confuting yourself, then consider how you will answer it to God and to the world, not openly to renounce tenets that must be so utterly subversive of it.

You are pleased, Sir, in one of your concluding pages, (p. 112.) to intimate your purpose of offering up in behalf of your young friend "your most ardent prayers at the throne of grace, that God would illuminate and irradiate his mind with a perfect and thorough conviction of the truth of his holy gospel." But if the end of your letter be indeed, what I find every body I converse with supposes it was, to overthrow what you here call "the holy gospel," and presently after, "that divine law dictated by the holy Spirit;" I cannot forbear saying, that such a speech as this would become an atheist much better than a deist. It is, in that case, so notorious an insult on the majesty of God, and the throne of his grace, as one would imagine no creature should dare to commit, who apprehended but a remote possibility that he might at length be obliged to prostrate himself before it, and ask the life of his soul there. It would pain my heart so much, to think you should be capable of carrying impiety to such a height, that I am sometimes ready rather to forget all that looks like infi-

delity and profaneness in what you had before written, and charitably to hope, though against hope, and though it be perhaps at some expence of my character that I should mention it, that you are indeed a devout, though irrational, believer of the gospel, and that your treatise is to be numbered amongst the wonders which enthusiasm has wrought, But whether you wrote this passage in earnest or in jest, it is with all seriousness I now assure you, that I pour out my ardent prayers before the throne of grace for you; that by the secret influences of the blessed Spirit on your heart, (to whose agency no prejudices are invincible) you may be led into a wiser and a happier way of thinking than you seem at present to entertain; and that God may not charge to your account the ruin of those souls, whom this unhappy pamphlet, whatever was intended by it, has so palpable and so fatal a tendency to destroy. Could what I have written, in either of these letters, be at all subservient to the accomplishment of this wish, it would be one of the most sensible pleasures which can ever reach the heart of,

Sir, your faithful humble Servant,

P. DODDRIDGE.

Northampton, Dec. 1, 1742.

LETTER III.

SIR,

WHEN I concluded my last letter to you, I was not determined upon this third address: But I make it in compliance with the request of several of my friends, who think, that in order to do full justice to the work I have undertaken, I ought to consider your third part. This they the rather urge, as it may give me an opportunity of vindicating an important doctrine of scripture, which some of the friends of christianity have unwarily represented in such a view, as to encourage its enemies to endeavour to plant their artillery against the gospel, on that ground, from whence, if there be due care taken, it is most capable of being defended. I am the more willing to comply with this request, because I find your ingenious correspondent at Oxford (whose letter to you has, I doubt not, given the world a great deal of pleasure,) has modestly omitted the discussion of this, as well as of several other points, which I have examined at large in my two former letters.

I proceed therefore directly to the consideration of what you have advanced in the third part of your book; in which you undertake to shew, that christianity cannot be founded on argument, i. e. that we cannot be obliged to exercise our reason in discovering its evidences, or judging of its doctrines, because God has prescribed another, and very different method of coming at the knowledge of divine truths; which is, as you represent it, in the 56th and following pages,) *the immediate operation of the holy Spirit* upon our minds, infallibly dictating to us the whole scheme and system of them, in such a manner, as to leave nothing to be done by ourselves, but merely to receive and assent to doctrines seen by their own light, under the influence of his teachings.

Now, here, Sir, had you separated some things, which you offer in illustration and proof of this general assertion, from the rest, I should have been very ready to have acknowledged their truth and their moment, and had it been necessary, (which I am well aware it would not have been,) to have joined with you in the defence of both; as you will easily see by what I am farther to offer, and must indeed well perceive from what I have already written in this controversy, even though you should be ever so much a stranger to my other writings; in all which I am continually referring to the necessity of divine influences on the mind, to form it to knowledge and holiness; and in some of which, (particularly my seventh sermon on regeneration,) I have set myself to defend the doctrine at large, in a manner which must certainly appear very sincere, and will, I hope, be found thoroughly convincing to all, who will seriously weigh it, and will abide by scripture as the standard of their faith*. But

* Had I not observed many other marks of very great haste in good Mr. Seagrave's pamphlet, in which he has undertaken to adjust matters between us, long before he had heard me out; I should have been much surprised to see myself charged with representing the agency of the spirit as only necessary to confirm faith, and quicken obedience, and with intimating that saving faith must of course follow a religious education. Surely, he is too honest, thus to misquote my words with design, or to say such things, had he read with any attention at all, I will not say, my sermons on education, (in which I strongly assert the contrary, as well as in those on regeneration,) but even the 34th page of my first letter on which he animadverts; in which I spake of the influences of divine grace as necessary to the success of the most pious and prudent attempt which parents can make: And in my second letter, published several days before his pamphlet, (p. 114.) I speak of it "as the office of the spirit, to enlighten and renew, to sanctify and strengthen, to cheer and guide the children of God and heirs of glory." I believe this rashness to have been the effect of a pious, though in this respect, ill governed zeal, and therefore I can easily excuse it; but my respect to that gentleman leads me to wish, that he may have patience, as Solomon well expresses it, (Prov. xviii. 13.) *to hear a matter before he answers it*, because I desire that every thing in which he engages may be *wisdom and honour to him*.

my complaint is, that what you teach on this head, though in many places very true, and expressed with great propriety, is intermingled and connected with other assertions, which seem to me quite unscriptural, and extravagant; and which, if they were to be admitted, must necessarily end in the subversion of christianity. For all your scheme centres in this, "that these influences and assistances of the spirit of God are of such a kind, as to contain an ample revelation of the whole system of christianity, to every particular person who is the subject of it; so as to supersede the necessity of any rational enquiry into the evidences or contents of religion; and in such a manner as to place him above all dependence on scripture, and, in one word, to make him absolutely infallible."

That the reader may not imagine, I mistake your meaning, and aggravate the matter beyond due bounds, I shall transcribe a few passages of yours, in which it will plainly appear, that you carry the matter to this extravagant height. And whoever attentively considers the connection of many of these passages with the rest, will immediately find, that what is most extravagant in these assertions, is so essential to your scheme, that were these passages to be moderated, the mention of this doctrine would be quite foreign to your purpose.

While you plead for the reality and necessity of such an influence, you call it in the general, "A constant and particular revelation, imparted separately, and supernaturally, to every individual." (page 112.) And elsewhere, (page 56.) you speak of the Spirit, as "the great dictator and infallible guide who is the promised oracle to attend believers to the end of the world, to irradiate their souls at once, as the *all-sufficient origin of faith*, in opposition to the aids and advices of reason." This you call (page 58.) "the light of inspiration, and infused evidence, which is of immediate influence, and operates, as in the case of Saul," (as if that were to be considered as a common standard,) without delay:" A principle, which effects conversion," (you must, I suppose, mean, *to the belief of christianity* as a speculative truth) "by an *irresistible light from heaven*, and flashes conviction in a moment;—producing," as you express it, (page 59.) "the most perfect and finished creed at once;"—so as to be "the sum and substance of all argumentation, and" (whatever that sublime expression may mean,) "the very spirit and extract of all convicting power, of a nature, perhaps, but little differing from intuition itself;—in consequence of which there is nothing in the suspicious repositories of human testimony," (in which, it is

evident from other passages, you include scripture,) " that can deserve the least notice, or be " thought worthy of a moment's attention on this subject." You call it, (page 60.) " A present and standing miracle of our own, in consequence of which we stand no longer in need of any of the credit of ancient miracles." You tell us, it produces " such indelible characters stamped upon the heart, as no misrepresentation can ever possibly intervene to corrupt:" And say, " that this faithful monitor and guardian has promised to continue this office *to the end of the world*, that we may not be left liable one moment to a possibility of error and imposition." So that, (not to multiply citations from many parallel passages,) as you express it, (page 90.) in as strong and determinate terms as can be imagined, " Actual infallibility is the only title whereon to ground any plausible claim to our discipleship."

Now, Sir, I seriously apprehend, that every intelligent reader will immediately conclude, that if this representation of the matter were indeed the genuine doctrine of christianity itself, this third part of your treatise, separate from the two former, which I hope have been already sufficiently confuted, would alone be an unanswerable demonstration, that christianity was false. If this be its language, and these its engagements, it is evidently condemned out of its own mouth, for surely all christians are not in fact infallible. Every error, and every contradiction maintained by any of them, on one side the question or the other, evinces this; unless both parts of a contradiction could be true. You must therefore, on these principles, reconcile error and infallibility, which it seems very difficult to do: Unless you should think fit to evade that necessity by saying, that they only among all the contending parties are to be acknowledged for christians, who are free from error; from any error, of any kind, or any degree, in any question in which religion is concerned. And this surely, in the judgment of every candid and impartial man, would be no other than acknowledging, that there is no such thing as a christian now in the world. And this would consequently prove christianity itself false, as it is confessedly a part of the scheme, that it was to be perpetuated to all ages by a *succession of faithful disciples*; which, according to the whole of your argument, it was the design of this extraordinary agency of the spirit to secure.

The absurdity of this is so flagrant, that I suppose you will rather chuse to say, that the reason why christians fall into error is, because they do not follow this infallible guide. But you must give me leave to remind you, that you have cut your-

self off from this retreat, by asserting this light to be irresistible, and to flash conviction in a moment: and by saying expressly, that it is an indelible character, instamped (as it seems by what you elsewhere maintain,) at our baptism, and incapable of being corrupted. You cannot surely imagine such a subterfuge consistent with saying, (as in the place quoted above,) "that actual infallibility is the only title to the claim of being a disciple." An actual infallibility, liable for want of due attention to be mistaken, is as incoherent an idea, as that of a square circle, or a cylindrical cone. Christianity must appear ridiculous, if it taught such a doctrine; and you will, I hope, Sir, examine your own conscience, as to the view in which you wished it should appear, when you fathered such a scheme upon it.

As I cannot remember ever to have seen the doctrine of the spirit's influence set in so injurious a light, and turned so visibly to the reproach of that gospel, to which, when duly explained, it is so distinguished a glory, I shall therefore set myself to canvass this point with you at large: And hope to shew, that this misrepresentation of what the scripture teaches on this head is as gross, as the scheme itself is inconsistent and absurd.

Now that this point may be set in as clear and easy a light as possible, I shall endeavour to shew,

First, That the scripture may say many very important things of the agency and operation of the spirit on men's minds, without carrying it to such a height as you suppose.

Secondly, That it says many things concerning these influences, and the persons under them, utterly inconsistent with your scheme. And,

Thirdly, That the passages on which you build your hypothesis, will none of them, if fairly interpreted, support it, and several of them are in themselves sufficient to subvert and overthrow it, though they have been unnaturally pressed into a contrary service.

Most of what I have farther to offer in reply to your letter, will be comprehended under one or other of these heads: But before I enter into the discussion of them, I must take leave to premise one preliminary; which is, That the question we are debating, is not by any means to be decided by human authority. I am very sensible, Sir, that some eminent divines of the Roman communion, and of the established church at home, as well as among our nonconformists, have, in the zeal and humility of their hearts, expressed themselves in a manner which cannot be defended, and thereby have given too plausible

an occasion for your dangerous and fatal misrepresentations. Yet I am not aware, that any of them, even Bishop Beveridge, or the celebrated Archbishop of Cambray himself, ever ran your lengths; and their other writings shew, how utterly they would have abhorred some of the consequences, which you have drawn, or suggested, from these principles. But my business is with *the law and with the testimony*; and where these holy and excellent men have not spoken according to that rule, I cannot believe that celestial light to have been in them, or suppose their minds under the guidance of that spirit, whom, though by ill-judged methods, it was undoubtedly their sincere and affectionate desire to glorify. Taking the matter, therefore, as the scripture represents it, it will be very easy to shew,

First, That the scripture may say many very high and important things concerning the agency and operation of the blessed Spirit on the hearts of believers, without carrying it so far as you represent, or laying any just foundation for the arguments you would build on such passages. Many things may be said of the Χαρισματα, or the extraordinary gifts and powers of the apostles and primitive christians, which were so peculiar to that age, that we have no personal concern in them at all:——And many things might be said of those operations which were to continue in all ages of the church, which though of great moment and universal concern, may fall very far short of what you assert, and must maintain, in order to establish the consequences you would connect with these principles.

It is of great importance here to recollect, (though you have artfully contrived, if possible, to keep your readers from such a view,) that many things in scripture, which relate to the operations of the Spirit of God on the mind, have a reference to those extraordinary gifts, which were peculiar to the apostles, and in which we of these later ages have no farther concern, than as the general knowledge of them may establish our regard to the writings of those eminent servants of Christ, who were wisely and graciously distinguished by their divine Master, by such extraordinary endowments, to fit them for the extraordinary office they sustained: An office, by which they were called out to plant the gospel, amidst a thousand oppositions, discouragements, and dangers, in countries where it was before utterly unknown; and also to draw up those important and sacred records, by which the knowledge of it was, in the purest and most comprehensive manner, to be communicated to the remotest ages and nations. It would be quite

foreign from my purpose, to enter into a nice enumeration of their peculiar gifts and powers. It plainly appears congruous to the general scheme of providence, so far as we can judge of it, that persons destined to such a work should have some uncommon furniture for it; not only beyond what could be expected by christians in future ages, when the gospel was settled in the world, and many ordinary helps provided, of which the church was then destitute; but also beyond what could be pretended to by private christians, or even by subordinate ministers, in those early days: And accordingly, modest and humble as the apostles were, we frequently find them speaking in their writings as the authorised ambassadors of Christ, who bore unequalled credentials from him; to whose decisions therefore, both churches, and their ministers were to submit, if they would not incur the guilt of despising their common Lord.

It will on these premises therefore be very readily granted to you, that these holy men might, as you speak, "have many particular revelations, separately and supernaturally imparted to each;" and that in such a manner as, while they were receiving them, might so far supersede the exercise of reason, as to leave them only to observe, report, and record *the oracles of God*, delivered to them, as of old to the prophets, who *spake as they were* immediately *moved*, or borne on, *by the Holy Ghost**, though all the Lord's people had no warrant to expect to be so immediately instructed and favoured. Whatever were the peculiar signification of *the word of wisdom*, and *the word of knowledge*, which were given to the apostles by the Spirit†, (concerning which there has been, and perhaps still may be, much debate,) it is put out of question by many evident passages in the New Testament, that the apostles were divinely assisted in the interpretation of the sacred oracles of the old, and were also favoured with such comprehensive views of the whole christian scheme as they could not have learnt by any human methods of investigation; or even by the personal instructions they had received from Christ in the days of his flesh, who expressly referred them to the Spirit as the great teacher, by whom they were to be instructed in many things which, while he was with them, they *were not able to bear*‡. These were such things, as *eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had it entered into the heart of man to conceive*

* 2 Pet. i. 21. † 1 Cor. xii. 8. ‡ John xvi. 12.

them; and it is easy to imagine, that with respect to these, they might very properly say, in a sense peculiar to themselves, *God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, which searcheth all things, even the deep things of God**: For *we have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given us of God; which things also we speak, in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth,* so as to be *judged by no man,* because *we have the mind of Christ*†.

These, Sir, were glorious apostolical prerogatives, in the highest sense which the words will bear; yet I cannot but observe, that, so far as we can judge by the New Testament, the degree of inspiration granted to them would not warrant some of those expressions which you use, when describing that which you suppose common to every christian. You will find it hard to prove, that all this conviction was flashed into their souls in a moment; that a finished creed was produced in their minds at once; and that none of them were for a moment left liable to a possibility of error. I think the contrary is demonstrable, even with regard to them; though I doubt not their being at length led into all necessary truth, and qualified to transmit it to us, without any mixture or alloy of falsehood.

The scripture may also, without establishing your peculiar doctrines on this head, farther teach, (as I am well satisfied it does,) that the holy Spirit was to *continue with the church* in all ages, *even to the end of the world;* that it was to be his stated office to *convince men of sin,* to direct their believing regards to a Saviour, and to *glorify Christ,* by *taking of his things* and *shewing them*‡, not only to the apostles but to succeeding believers. It may teach us, that, by his influence, *God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into our hearts, to give the knowledge of his glory,* as reflected *from the face of his Son*§; that he irradiates our understandings, and sanctifies our affections, so that in consequence of this, when we commence cordial believers, *we are born of the Spirit.* The whole genius of scripture may lead us, (as I am fully persuaded it does,) chiefly to ascribe unto his gracious influences, our understanding in divine things, as well as our disposition to comply with the method of salvation which the gospel exhibits, and with the precepts it establishes. All this may be granted, may be asserted, may be contended for, without maintaining "a constant and supernatural revelation, to be imparted to every individual, so as to be the *all-sufficient*

*1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. †1 Cor. ii. 12, 13, 15, 16. ‡John xvi. 14. §2 Cor. iv. 6.

origin of faith," not only in neglect of the aids of reason, but " in opposition to them." There may be all that I have here supposed, and yet there may be no " irresistible light, to flash such a conviction in a moment, as to produce a finished creed at once ;" so that from the illustrious æra of illumination, " scripture should be thought unworthy of a moment's attention, and a standing miracle produced, which should supersede our necessity of attending to those which were anciently wrought in confirmation of the gospel." Great encouragement may be given, in the use of rational means, to hope for the continued influence of the Spirit to improve our knowledge ; though we may be, not only for a single moment, but during every moment of our lives, liable to err in the circumstantials of religion: Nay, I see no reason to ground the claim of our discipleship, upon any pretence at all to actual infallibility.

Prove, Sir, if it lies in your power, the necessary connection between what I have here acknowledged, (I think with most other christians in all ages,) and that part of your scheme, which I here deny to be by any means a consequence from it. For you must easily see, that these controverted branches of it are the only foundation of that conclusion, towards which you are all along driving: Since upon any other hypothesis, but that which the extravagant language I have so often repeated expresses, the humble and diligent use of our own reason in matters of religion is so far from being superseded; that on the other hand, it will (as I shall presently shew more at large,) appear a most necessary duty, in consequence of this very promise of divine assistance ; if we would not turn it into an ungrateful insult on those natural methods of information, which providence has given us, and to the improvement of which the promises of grace were intended to animate us.

Having thus illustrated and confirmed this general remark, which may be applied to a multitude of texts in the New Testament, which it will not by any means be necessary particularly to enumerate in this debate ; I now proceed,

Secondly, To shew that the scripture says many things concerning the influences of the Spirit, and the persons under various degrees of them, which are utterly irreconcileable with your representation of them, as stated above.

And here the leading thought is, that the New Testament, (of which we here especially speak,) frequently supposes, and expressly requires and institutes the use of such means, in persons under the illuminating and sanctifying influences of

the Spirit, as you suppose to be entirely superseded by those influences.

And for the truth of this, I appeal to the whole tenor of the sacred writings, in which you find such exhortations and instructions given, and such regards required to them, as must certainly prove, how far the christians to whom they are directed, were from such an extent, and such an infallibility of knowledge, as you suppose inseparably connected with a claim of discipleship, and necessarily to result from the teachings of their divine Monitor. But it would be tedious and useless to take up my reader's time with particulars: Let him read over the epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians in particular with your principles in his view, and judge whether almost every chapter, and in some places every verse, does not strongly exclaim against them. Indeed, according to your representation of the matter, nothing could have been more superfluous, than the very institution of a stated ministry in the church. According to St. Paul's view of it, this was a great and important design of our blessed Redeemer, when after the triumph of his ascension he distributed the royal donative of his Spirit, and gave under its influence, besides *apostles, prophets* and *evangelists, pastors, and teachers;—to perfect the saints for the work of the ministry, in order to the* gradual *edification of the body of Christ; till all should come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man,* even *unto the* complete *measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,* or to the state of a *full-grown christian**. Reconcile this, Sir, if you can, with your scheme of their shooting up at once, into the full knowledge of every thing relating to religion, into actual infallibility, and such a glorious independency on all the methods of human instruction.

The contrariety of this to the whole scheme and tenor of scripture is so plain, that I shall add on this head only one remark farther, as a specimen of many more which might fill a volume: I mean, that such advices are given even to those, who were appointed the teachers of others, and consequently must be supposed to have a peculiar share of divine and supernatural illumination, as, on your hypothesis, would have been unnecessary, even to the least and meanest of their charge. Thus, when Paul takes his leave of the elders at Ephesus, he solemnly *commends* them *to the word of God's grace,* as what was *able to build them up*†. And in terms yet less liable to objection, when writing to Timothy, (though as an evangelist,

* Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. † Acts xx. 32.

superior by far to the class of ordinary ministers, and endowed with miraculous gifts nearly approaching those of the apostolic office,) he charges him, in his first epistle, to *give attendance to reading*, and to *meditate on* the divine things he had learnt*: And yet more expressly in his second epistle, as Timothy *from a child had known the holy scriptures*, which the apostle testifies, *were able to make him wise to salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus*, he solemnly charges him to *continue in the things which he had learned*†; that is, no doubt in the study of these scriptures, as well as those instructions he had received from Paul; each of which would, according to you, have been equally superseded. And then, instead of talking of "manuscript authorities, and paper revelations, the suspicious repositories of human testimony, in which to a man illuminated from above, there could be nothing of consequence enough to engage a moment's attention," (*your own* never to be forgotten *words*,) the apostle closes the period with this remarkable testimony; *All scripture*, (or the whole scripture) *is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine*, as well as *for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God*, i. e. not only the *christian*, but the *minister*, the *evangelist*, the *apostle*, *may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*‡.

And thus, Sir, by the review of these passages, in comparison with a multitude more which might easily be added to them, we are taught the true scripture-doctrine of the illuminating influences of the spirit, (which are now chiefly in question;) and I shall endeavour in a few words to propose it, without the assistance and incumbrance of those technical phrases, which modern divines have introduced; and which, how profitable soever many of them may be, cannot I suppose seem absolutely necessary, to any who regard the scripture as a complete rule.

Now I apprehend the substance of it to be this. God is the great father of lights, the author of all the understanding divided among the various ranks of created beings; who, as he at first formed the minds of angels and men, continues the exercise of their intellectual faculties, and one way or another communicates to them all the knowledge of every kind, which they possess§.

* 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15. † 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

§ In this view, all our knowledge of every kind may be called *a revelation from God*, and be ascribed, as it is by *Elihu*, to *the inspiration of the Almighty*: (Job xxxii. 8.) But the words revelation and inspiration are so generally used in a much stricter sense, and with reference to a miraculous divine interposition to communicate knowledge, not attainable, or to be expected in a natural way, that I think it fittest commonly to confine these words to that more special and elevated signification.

But whereas there were certain points, which it was necessary for men to know in this fallen state, in order to their recovery and final happiness, which they could not possibly have discovered by the most accurate and intense use of their natural faculties; God was pleased by his holy spirit, in a manner which we cannot particularly explain, to reveal them to the apostles; and after having furnished them with sufficient credentials, to prove, to all impartial enquirers, that the extraordinary doctrines they taught, were not the reveries of an heated imagination, but indeed instructions from heaven, he directed these apostles, by an extraordinary influence on their minds, to record the history of such facts, and to write such instructions to the churches with whom they were immediately concerned, as should happily contain an exact, unaffected, and full representation of the genuine christian doctrine, as well as of the manner of its being introduced into the world, and established in it. This grand design is so happily executed, that I doubt not, but every person of common capacity might, on reading the New Testament, understand, by the mere use of his natural faculties, what the institutions of Christ are; as well as he might understand those of Solon or Lycurgus, by reading the writings of Xenophon, Plutarch, or any other ancient historian.

But I further apprehend, that as the gospel was a scheme, in which the divine glory, and the salvation of men were so intimately concerned, the spirit of God, which had in a more imperfect degree operated on men's minds under the Mosaic dispensation, to assist their understandings in apprehending the sense of the sacred oracles, and to affect their hearts in conformity to their practical design, did, and does, in a yet more abundant manner, interest himself in the preservation and efficacy of this nobler institution, in the first establishment of which he had so illustrious a part.

There is reason to think, that in the earliest age his interposition, even in those who were not the original depositaries of this revelation, might be more sensible and remarkable, than now. It seems very congruous to the nature and circumstances of things, so far as we can judge of them, (for I take not upon me absolutely to assert it,) that among the other miraculous gifts bestowed by the apostles on the first ministers, whom they settled in new formed churches, some of them might immediately relate to the understanding and memory of the persons so ordained; in consequence of which they should, for the benefit of the flocks respectively committed to their care, more readily apprehend, and more exactly retain, what the apostles taught

them, than in the mere strength of their natural faculties they could have done.

Yet, as the spirit was to abide with the church always, and all true christians are, agreeably to that promise, represented as *born of the Spirit*, as *led by it*, and, by virtue of its operations, as one with Christ, it seems to me apparent, that to confine his operations to the miraculous gifts and powers of those early ages, is in a great measure to subvert christianity, or at least to rob it of its greatest glory, and its professors of their noblest support and encouragement. But, if we grant his continued influence on the minds of christians in any degree, as we cannot suppose it to be a blind and irrational impulse, urging us to what we see no just reason to pursue, it is very analogous to the reason of things to suppose, that he operates upon our understandings, as well as on the other faculties of the soul.

We readily allow, that the manner of these operations cannot be clearly and fully expressed, as neither can we explain that of sensation or memory. But this ignorance of the particular manner does not, as one would imagine some apprehended, leave men at liberty to assert, at random, whatever they please about it. We may reasonably conclude, that it is not the stated office of the divine Spirit to reveal new doctrines, which the scripture does not teach; for if it were, God would undoubtedly, as when he formerly added to prior revelations given to his church, furnish the persons to whom such discoveries were made, with proper credentials to authorize their report: And if this cannot be proved, it ought not to be asserted. Nor can we imagine it his office, to reveal, by an immediate suggestion, the doctrines already delivered in scripture, to those who may have daily opportunities of learning them from thence. My first letter proved, that there is in the nature of things no necessity for this, since the truth of the revelation may to such be known without it; and to say, that where that truth in general is known, there is a necessity of such a revelation of particular doctrines, in order to their being understood, is making a sad compliment to the written word of God, and is indeed making it quite an insignificant and useless thing. If any such facts can be produced, let the evidence of them be laid before the world, and all due regard shall be paid to them; but in theory it seems improbable, because so plainly unnecessary, that God should do that in a miraculous, which he has so amply provided for in an ordinary way. Of this at least I may be very confident, that he hath never given any encouragement, either in the Old

Testament, or the New, which should lead men to expect and hope, that he should thus come, and whisper in their ear, by immediate inspiration, the truths and doctrines which he speaks aloud in his word, and which they will neither read nor hear there. I think a man might as well expect, that if, when entering on a course of study, he were to put out his own eyes, God should, by miracle, give him the complete and orderly idea of all the characters of books, which he might otherwise have read *.

Far be it from me in the mean time to deny, that God may, by an extraordinary agency, render men's faculties more capable of apprehension, where divine things are concerned, than they might otherwise be. He may, no doubt, do it: He may also awaken a dormant idea, which lay neglected in the memory, with unusual energy; he may secretly attract the more attentive regard of the mind to it; and give a man both an inclination, and an ability of tracing its various relations, with an unusual attention, so that a lustre before quite unknown shall be (as it were) poured upon it; while in the mean time prejudices, which rendered the mind indisposed for the search, or admission and acknowledgment of truth, may be suspended, and even by imperceptible degrees dissipated. In all these particulars, there may be a real operation of the spirit of God upon men's minds, under which they may not themselves be conscious of any thing at all extraordinary, though it be indeed so. You well know, Sir, that in the natural world, the divine agency accomplishes all by second causes, and yet in such a manner, that hiding itself (as it were) behind them, it is seldom taken notice of: according to that fine expression of Mr. Thompson,

> Alone He works in all, yet He alone,
> Seems not to work.——

As christians we must believe, that angels are employed for our preservation from day to day; yet I suppose we generally pass through life, without being able to fix on any one circumstance concerning which we can assuredly say, "This was the effect of angelic interposition." And thus may there be a real operation of the holy Spirit upon the mind,

* I must intreat the reader to observe, that I do, in the following paragraph, speak chiefly of such influences of the spirit, as I apprehend, in some degree, common to all real and sincere christians; allowing there are cases of a very peculiar and distinguished nature, in which God goes out of his usual methods, both of providence and grace, to reclaim, renew, and enlighten some very great sinners, in a manner which no man living has any warrant to expect. See my Sermons on Regeneration, Sermon VIII.

to render it more susceptible, or more tenacious of divine knowledge: while all seems to be done by the regular exercise of the human faculties, in concurrence with which God works. And in consequence of this a divine truth so learnt may not, and will not, be considered, as an immediate revelation from God, nor be assented to as on the credit of this operation; but as on the evidence of reason or scripture, which the mind under this guidance is enabled to discern.

And on this head I desire it may be remembered, (for it is too evident to be disputed,) that our obligation to attend to any particular notice, which God has given us either of truth or duty, does not depend on its being a notice given us in this, or that distinguishing way, whether natural, or supernatural; but upon that which is common to all kind of notices from God as such. Nor does our obligation to follow any good inclination, which arises in our mind, depend upon its being naturally or supernaturally produced, but simply, or at least chiefly, upon the evidence we have of its being good. Nay, I will venture to say, (on this foundation,) that it seems to me, that extraordinary divine influences, imparted in this imperceptible way, are much more suitable to the wisdom and goodness of the adorable Being, from whom they come; as they much better agree with a state of trial, and with the general scheme of conducting us by faith rather than sight: As it likewise does, that angels and devils should be invisible to human eyes.

On the whole, therefore, comparing one part of this account with the other, when our minds have been deeply impressed with divine truths, when we have been awakened diligently to attend to them, studying the scripture, not merely as matter of curiosity, but with a serious desire of learning how the favor of God is to be obtained; when we have felt our hearts strongly impressed with good affections; when we have been animated by an inward vigour, much better felt than described, to vanquish strong temptations, and with patience and resolution to discharge our duty in the midst of difficulty and discouragement; I think, the whole tenour of scripture directs us to ascribe this, not only to the goodness of providence, in making us rational creatures, and making us acquainted with the excellent revelation of truth and duty contained in scripture; but also to the secret and gracious influences of the holy Spirit on our hearts, in concurrence with those other advantages. And it seems to me quite trifling, to amuse ourselves with nice speculations, where nature ends, and where grace begins, or what specific difference there is between the know-

ledge we obtain from each, while their operation is united. Should a number of mechanics, to whom their master had allowed two candles for their work, instead of pursuing their business, set themselves curiously to observe the difference between their size and materials, (if such difference there were;) and in consequence of those observations to dispute, whether in the compound light of both they could distinguish the rays of each, by any peculiar purity and lustre apprehended in the one, rather than the other; we should certainly think them very idly employed, and their master would give them very little thanks for so ill-judged a curiosity. On the like principle, I freely acknowledge, it has often grieved me to the heart to observe, how many volumes of polemical divinity have been written on questions, which neither need, nor admit determination, on this topic, as well as others.

But it is much for the honour of scripture, that it meddles not with these niceties. It lays down the general principles I have mentioned: It exhorts men to take all proper measures, to obtain the knowledge of divine things, by reading, by meditation, i. e. undoubtedly by the exercise of their rational faculties, which it expresses by *being men in understanding**: And it farther directs, that all these pursuits should be undertaken, and carried on, in an humble dependence on God, who *giveth wisdom*, and *out of whose mouth cometh knowledge and understanding*†. He *begins the good work in us*, he *carries it on until the day of the Lord*‡, and *worketh in us both to will and to do*§. Under these influences, we ascribe unto God the glory of every intellectual, moral, and spiritual attainment, humbling ourselves before him, that these attainments have been no greater; which they undoubtedly might have been, in consequence of a more diligent use of the means and opportunities, which he has afforded, and to the faithful improvement of which he has given, and limited, his promises of farther supernatural assistances; though I am very far from saying, they are imparted only to such, as might on these promises have pleaded a claim to them.

This, Sir, I really take to be the scripture doctrine of divine influence, and particularly of the Spirit's office in illuminating the mind: But you easily saw that this, instead of establishing what you teach of throwing aside the exercise of reason in religion, would utterly have overthrown it, and would (as I observed above,) have made the diligent use of that reason,

* 1 Cor. xiv. 20. † Prov. ii. 6. ‡ Phil. i. 6. § Phil. ii. 13.

in concurrence with humble prayer and the use of proper means of information, the only way in which we could warrantably have expected such enlightening and sanctifying influences. You therefore have thought fit to give another representation of the matter, directly contrary to what I have stated above; and you have attempted to prove it by many remarkable passages of the New Testament.

Now I really apprehend, and own, whatever you might intend by this argumentation, that if these scriptures are rightly applied, and will establish the purpose for which you bring them, christianity is overthrown; and all I have been saying, in this part of my letter, must prejudice, rather than support it: Since if your representations are just, it teaches a doctrine, not only absurd in theory, and false in fact, but also self-contradictory; and contrives to render entirely vain and insignificant all those grand preparations, which it describes as made for teaching the gospel in a natural way, and the prudent use of which it so warmly inculcates, in a multitude of other passages. And therefore,

Thirdly, I shall consider in this view what you alledge from scripture upon this head; which I shall handle as an objection, drawn from the supposed absurd and contradictory representation of the doctrine of the spirit's influence in certain passages of it; and shew, that those texts on which you build your hypothesis, will none of them, if fairly interpreted, support it, and several of them are in themselves sufficient to subvert and overthrow it.

Now, here, Sir, it seems proper to observe to the reader, that you have no where marshalled your arguments on this head; perhaps conscious, that they would make but an indifferent figure, when professedly brought together. You chuse rather to boast, that they are many and great, than particularly to shew us what they are: And therefore after slightly mentioning a few texts in your 56th page, which I shall presently examine, you gallantly say, "It were endless to recount all the innumerable passages, throughout the whole scripture, that concur in ascertaining this:" And then you intermingle the mention of several other texts, with the course of your declamation on this subject; not canvassing the sense or connection of them, nor seeming to attend to any thing more than the sound: For which in the 105th page you make a general, and, I think, remarkable apology. "That in the haste of your zeal you may have laid yourself open unguardedly enough, if the thing were to be examined according to the rules of strict criticism: But

that it is enough for your design, if the main drift and scope of your argument may be allowed to be, upon the whole, maintained only with some tolerable degree of propriety, so as to carry just the face of something plausible and consistent."

Your young friend, in his reply, has touched upon this extraordinary passage of yours, in so handsome a manner, as to render it less necessary for me to insist upon it. I am very ready to make you all the acknowledgments, which such a frank confession of your own uncertainty, on a point which you have so often confidently asserted, can be supposed to merit. But really, Sir, I cannot agree with you, "that a critical punctuality is not at all material to the purpose in hand." If so desperate a charge be advanced against the gospel, as that it teaches the monstrous doctrine, which I have from your own letter representsd above, I am sure it ought to be proved in the most convincing manner, with such a critical punctuality as shall make it apparent, not only that some passages in it may possibly admit of such a sense, but that those on which you lay the main stress of your argument, cannot with any tolerable propriety bear any other. And if, when both the interpretations were proposed, there were some degree of probability in favour of yours, which I am persuaded will never in any one instance be the case; it would remain farther to be examined, whether that preponderancy of probability were sufficient to counterbalance all the arguments in favour of christianity, which must otherwise be given up as absurd. But this last consideration, which I mention chiefly on account of its great weight in every objection against the gospel, and because it seems to be so often forgot, need not be insisted upon here; as I believe the reader will easily perceive, when the particulars are examined.

I have therefore given myself the trouble of collecting your proofs, as carefully as I can; and when I have placed them in what I apprehend their most natural order, I shall consider them particularly: And so much the rather, as several of the texts must be acknowledged to have some difficulty attending them, and I apprehend the examination of them may be agreeable and useful to many of my readers; though it be so unnecessary with regard to yourself, who it seems meant nothing more, than to amuse the world with what might carry just the face of something plausible: A trial of skill, which on so weighty a subject might well have been spared, and which may perhaps on the sequel be found, what attempts on scripture generally are, rolling a stone which

may return upon the mover, and may prove far more burdensome than was at first imagined.

Now here, that we may proceed in something of method, I will range the texts you have been pleased to produce, (either as containing your doctrine, or as referring to it,) in such an order, as I imagine may give the best varnish to the conclusion you would infer from them; at the same time mentioning the page in which you cite them, that the reader may be fully satisfied, they are such as you have thought fit to mention, how needless, and how unfortunate soever to your cause, the mention of some of them may appear.

In different places therefore you think proper to remind us, that our Lord himself taught, that *no man could come unto him, unless it were given him by the Father*; (page 57.) and promiseth *the Spirit*, who was *to testify of him* and to lead his followers *into all truth*: (ibid.) That accordingly the apostles declare, that *faith is the gift of God*; (ibid.) and that *he who believeth, hath the witness in himself*; (page 56.) which is so necessary in order to faith, that *no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*; (ibid.) for *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*, (page 103.) even by *that spiritual man*, who *judges all things, while he himself is judged of none*: To him is made known that internal word, which is in his mouth, and in his heart, so that he need not say, *Who shall ascend into heaven, or who shall descend into the deep?* (p. 79, 80.) In reference to this, therefore, *he who believeth not, makes God a liar*. (p. 54.) Without granting this, you tell us, we can never account for the apostle's pronouncing an *anathema on himself or an angel from heaven, who should preach a* contrary *doctrine*; (page 11.) or for his exhorting christians to be *all of one mind*, and *to think and speak the same thing*, which without such an infallible universal teacher would be quite impossible. (page 65.) With reference also to this teaching we are exhorted to *become as little children, that we may enter into the kingdom of God*; which you seem to understand as a command to lay aside our reason wherever religion is concerned: (page 75.) In which sense, it seems, every high thing, i. e. every argument, is to be *captivated to the obedience of Christ*. (page 84.) And finally, that if faith were built upon any other foundation, it would be utterly absurd to pray for its increase; (page 10.) and that infant-baptism, here taken for granted to be a divine institution, would on any other scheme be

unjustifiable and unintelligible. (p. 69.) These, Sir, are (so far as I can find,) the grand foundations, on which you build the doctrine I am now opposing; but how precariously, I question not many will see from reading the enumeration I have given in this connection, which is that I would have chosen for them, if they had been in this view my own arguments. Nevertheless, for the reasons given above, we will discuss them a little more particularly.

That we may remember what we are about, I must intreat my reader to recollect, that if the texts above answer your purpose, they must prove an immediate revelation of the whole system of christianity, to every particular christian, in such a manner, as to make it unnecessary for him to enquire into any other evidence from reason or scripture, to evince the truth of the gospel in general, or of any branch of it which might be proposed to his examination.

Having premised this, I hope to make it appear, on the review,—that some of the texts in question do not refer to any revelation of truth at all;—that others were peculiar to the apostles;—and that no one of them will answer your purpose; because there is none but what may be fairly interpreted, in an important and useful sense, far short of what you would give it. I think, every one of the texts will fall under one or another of these three classes. And here, as I am not at puzzling the cause, but at stating the truth in a fair light, I shall at once allow you every where, as much as I do in my conscience think ought to be allowed to each passage in question; though I am very well aware, (as you may perhaps learn from some other hand,) that a great many things might be said to render some things dubious, which in the course of the argument I am ready to grant you.

When our Lord tells us, *No man can come unto him, except it be given him of the Father**; and the apostle testifies, that *faith is the gift of God*†; it may indeed imply, that any one, who is brought cordially to believe the gospel, and to apply to Christ for salvation, according to the scheme laid down in it, has reason to ascribe it, not only to the divine goodness in granting him a revelation of the great truths of our religion, but also to the secret influence of divine grace upon his heart; so fixing his attention to those truths, and so affecting his soul with them, as effectually to produce that cordial consent to the terms of the christian covenant, which is often in scrip-

* John vi. 44. † Eph. ii. 8.

ture expressed by believing, or by coming to Christ. And how many thousands will gladly acknowledge the reality of such an influence on their minds, who pretend to no immediate revelation, and who embrace the gospel, because they see such rational evidence of it, as they apprehend sufficient to convince every impartial enquirer; an evidence, within the reach of all, who live in a christian country; nay, actually attained by many, who, clearly as their understandings are convinced, feel nothing of the efficacy of these truths on their hearts!

Again, our Lord pronounces, that *the Spirit should testify of him**: But you will please to recollect, that this promise was immediately addressed to the apostles; and that it would have had an important meaning, if it had only referred to those miraculous works, by which the Spirit confirmed that glorious and convincing testimony, which the apostles bore to the truth of the gospel.—A promise to them, to *guide them into all truth*†, might also be peculiar to the extraordinary office which they sustained, in order to the execution of which it was necessary, that these things should be taught them by an immediate and personal revelation, which thousands more might receive, without any such revelation, from their lips, or their writings. So that, if such an immediate revelation to every christian in all ages cannot be proved from some other argument, it is certain that the mention of this scripture will prove nothing to the purpose, and St. Paul's question, *Are all apostles*‡? will be a sufficient reply to the allegation of it on this occasion.

It seems indeed much more to your purpose, that the apostle John, when writing to a community of christians, speaks in language bearing some resemblance to this of our Lord, to him and his brethren in that illustrious office, particularly where it is said, that *he who believes hath the witness in himself* §; and that *they had an unction from the holy One, and knew all things*‖. Yet will neither of these expressions, which are some of the strongest used in the whole New Testament with reference to this point, by any means, answer the purpose for which you produce them.

The believer may surely be said to have the witness within himself, as his personal experience of the power of the gospel on his own heart affords him a noble internal evidence of its

* John xv. 26. † John xvi. 13. ‡ 1 Cor. xii. 29.
§ 1 John v. 10. ‖ 1 John. ii. 29.

should not be peculiarly bright; nay, though" (which for any thing I can find might often have been the case,) "he should have received none of those miraculous gifts at all, about which you Corinthians so eagerly contend." In this easy view of the passage, the remark seems exceeding pertinent. But what imaginable connection is there, between a sanctifying influence on the heart, productive of real piety, and a full revelation of a perfect creed at once, or of any single article before unknown, with a light little different from intuition itself, and which renders the assistance of reason and scripture quite superfluous. The manner in which the apostle addresses to the real christians at Corinth, abundantly demonstrates, how far he was from supposing that to be the case, and how far he would have been from allowing such an inference from any principle laid down by him, here, or elsewhere.

As little to your purpose will you find that other boasted passage of St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans, which you quote in your 79th page, as if it were the very design of the apostle to establish your whole notion and doctrine in it. Accordingly you say, "But the passage, that most fully, and beyond all possibility of misconception, describes to us the true nature of faith, in manifest opposition to that mistaken notion of a rational one, which some had it seems erroneously entertained, is in the tenth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, where the whole question is discussed at large, and thus precisely determined:" And then you quote the words themselves, which are these; *The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?—or who shall descend into the deep?—The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thine heart, &c**.

Now, Sir, you must pardon me, if I express my surprise, that you should thus pompously quote a passage, in which the clearness of the scripture revelation is asserted, to prove that it is attended with such obscurity, that it is not to be expected, that any man should understand it, otherwise than in consequence of an immediate revelation, i. e. by miracle. I readily acknowledge, that the passage is something difficult; but it seems to me so far from clearly expressing your doctrine, that I do not see, how it can bear to be interpreted so, as in any measure to give it the least countenance.

You well know, Sir, that these words are an allusion to, and a quotation from the Old Testament†; where Moses, in his

* Rom. x. 6, & seq. † Deut. xxx. 12, 13, 14.

eloquent manner, congratulates the people of Israel on their being favoured with so clear and so full a discovery of the will of God in his written law; in consequence of which there was no need for them to say, *Who shall go up for us to heaven?—or, who shall go over the sea for us?—The word is very nigh thee*, says this illustrious legislator, *even in thy mouth, and in thine heart, that thou mayest do it:* It is easily understood, easily remembered, and on the whole, admirably fitted to impress and affect the mind. In allusion to this, the apostle, with great beauty and propriety, tells the christians to whom he wrote, that the revelation of the gospel by Christ was as plain and evident, as that of the law by Moses: *The righteousness which is of faith* (i. e. the gospel, which teacheth us the way of justification by faith,) *speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above?) Or who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead?)* As if he should have said, "Had Christ never descended from heaven, or had he never risen again from the depths of the earth in which he was buried, we might indeed have been at a loss to know the way of salvation, and might have been left, like the rest of the world, in a thousand doubts and uncertainties. But now, since Christ has descended from heaven to bring the gospel, and has risen from the dead to confirm it, we well known the way: And blessed be God, it is very easy and practicable, open to every one that shall receive the gospel, and very nigh him, in more senses than one, in the mouth, and in the heart. Let but the mouth, and the heart, do their respective parts, the one cordially believing in Christ, and the other courageously confessing him, in such a manner as to approve that inward sincerity; and salvation may be obtained, even though the law hath been broken, that awful law, which, intelligible as it was, did still rigorously insist upon it, that the man should exactly do its precepts, who would hope to *live by them**." This, Sir, is the assertion, and illustration of the apostle; and how widely this differs from the view in which you have introduced it, I am persuaded, that you and my other readers will easily see. They will, no doubt, think the turn you have given it, an instance of admirable invention and dexterous address; and as you seem not solicitous, that it should be thought solid, I hope all parties will be agreed.

Another of your texts, which I would by no means leave uncanvassed, and which, at first appearance, seems much more

* Rom. x. 5.

favourable to your cause than the former, though not so much gloried in, is that of St. Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians: *The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, &c.** From hence you would infer, that it is only by an immediate inspiration from the Spirit, that divine truths can be known, and consequently that reasoning must be quite superfluous in such a pursuit. I shall not here reply, as some have done, that ψυχικος signifies a man who proceeds in his religious enquiries merely on principles of natural reason; while πνευματικος signifies one who admits of a divine revelation, and allows arguments deduced from its authority. If this were to be granted as the sense of these two words, the meaning of the text would be, that revelation teaches some things which reason could never have discovered. This, I think, is the sense Dr. Clagget gives of the passage, in his laboured explication of it: But I cannot acquiesce in it; because it will by no means follow from hence, that the natural man cannot receive them, and they must be foolishness to him: On the contrary, were a man to reason well, he might in many instances discover harmony, beauty, and wisdom, in those doctrines, schemes, and facts, which are known only by revelation. I shall therefore grant, that by the natural man we are to understand, one who is sunk in the animal life†; one, who under the influence of those false maxims, which the corruption of mankind has introduced into the world, is rendered carnal, and sensual, and consequently attached to views of seculiar interest, or vain glory. Such persons are indeed unwilling to admit of such truths as the gospel teaches, and therefore choose rather to object against its evidence, than to submit to its instructions. This the apostle might well assert; and as the counter-part of the thought might lead his readers to reflect, that they who feel these prejudices conquered in their minds, and are brought to discern the beauty and glory of those truths which the gospel teaches, have reason to ascribe it to the influence of the divine Spirit on their hearts; or in other words, to own, that these truths (which were at first revealed to the apostles by the spirit of God, and therefore are called his things,) are spiritually discerned. In consequence of which the happy

* 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15.

† This, I think, the etymology of the word ψυχικος may well intimate; and the use of it elsewhere may warrant the explication. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 44, 46. Jam. iii. 15. and Jude ver. 19. in the two last of which passages it is rendered sensual.

man, almost like one restored to sight among the blind, ανακρινει παντα, discerns all the objects with which he is surrounded, while he himself υπ' ουδενος ανακρινεται, is discerned by none of them; but perhaps is proudly censured, by these prejudiced and bigotted creatures, as a mere visionary, for those judgments which are most rationally formed, on principles which every impartial enquirer will understand. If this easy interpretation of the words be admitted, they will appear quite foreign to your purpose, and applicable to multitudes to whom no single truth of christianity was taught by miracle, but who by divine grace were inclined to receive that gospel, which the apostle tells us, in the preceding verse, he and his brethren taught, comparing spiritual things with spiritual: A care, which, whether it refers to the manner of their investigation, or to that of communicating the sacred knowledge, would be quite unnecessary on your hypothesis. So unlucky for your cause will criticism and connection be found, in this instance, as well as the former.

That he, who disbelieves the gospel, *maketh God a liar**, (i. e. rejects his testimony as unworthy of credit,) will be true, if God has borne any testimony to the gospel at all, which is, or might be known by such a rejector of it; and will be no less the case, where the external testimony of miracles is in question, than if the inward impression, which you maintain, were to be granted. This text therefore, by no means determining how the testimony is borne, can be of no service to your cause.—— Nor will that cause find a surer refuge in those words of St. Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians; *Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a different gospel to you, let him be accursed*†. This is only a strong way of saying, that the gospel, which they had already been taught, was so assuredly true, that any one, who should presume to contradict it, far from being worthy of any regard, would rather be worthy of a curse; and that it would be an argument of damnable apostacy, in an apostle, or even an angel, to attempt to subvert it. Were this passage to be taken in the most rigorous sense that can be imagined, it would amount to no more than this; that the evidence, which they had received of the truth of christianity, was greater than God would ever permit an angel to bring against it, were it possible for one of those celestial spirits to revolt, and appear with a contrary doctrine. And this is what we all believe, upon this general principle, that God will never permit any evil spirit, (and such any angel contradicting the gospel would certainly

* 1 John v. 10. † Gal. i. 8.

be,) to work more and greater miracles to overthrow christianity, than have already been wrought to confirm it. Now this might have been true, even though all the operations of the Spirit had ceased in the remoter ages of the church, or though the illumination of our minds by his immediate influence had been no part of his office.

But you triumph greatly in this thought, that without such a plenary revelation of the truth, to every particular person, by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, it would be impossible that all men should be of one mind; which nevertheless the apostle prays that christians might be, and exhorts them to labour after. But I wonder, Sir, you should not see, that when he offers this petition for them, or addresses them with such an exhortation, he plainly supposes, they were not at present under such an uniting guidance, in consequence of which (as you express it,) they were preserved from the least possibility of mistake. So that, even on your own principles, you must be obliged to admit of some qualifying interpretation: And it so easily presents itself, that I think hardly any writer but yourself has missed it. To be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and the same sentiment, (as I think it is most natural to translate εν τη αυτη γνωμη*; to have the same mutual disposition or affection, (το αυτο φρονειν εν αλληλοις, as it is elsewhere expressed†, or εις αλληλους, as in the parallel passage‡;) plainly signifies to cultivate harmony, or unanimity, or to maintain a friendly disposition towards each other, notwithstanding some diversity in their taste, opinion, or customs. And that this is the meaning of the expression is evident, from what the apostle elsewhere says, both to the Corinthians, and to the Romans, to whom these exhortations are addressed; where he supposes, there would be a difference in opinion and practice among them in some things, and yet urges them to *think favourably of each other*, and to *receive one another*§, *as Christ had received them* all, if sincere christians, whether Jews or Gentiles; and how different soever their apprehensions might be, as to the lawfulness or unlawfulness, the expediency or inexpediency, of some practices which were in question among them. And thus does the apostle explain himself in that parallel text‖, where, when he had so tenderly intreated them, *by the consolation of Christ, by the comfort of love*, and *by the communion of the Spirit, that they should be like-minded*, [ινα το αυτο

* 1 Cor. i. 10. † Rom. xv. 5. ‡ Rom. xii. 16. § 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Rom. xv. 7.
‖ Phil. ii. 1, 2.

φρονῆτε, *that ye may be unanimous,*] he adds, *having the same love, being of one accord,* τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμψυχοι, which two phrases explain the former; as if he should have said, *Let your souls be joined together in the same love:* And then he adds, τὸ ἓν φρονοῦντες, which if it be not a mere repetition of the first clause, τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε, *be unanimous,* may perhaps be rendered, attend to and prosecute (the τὸ ἓν) the one thing, that great leading concern of vital practical religion, *the service of God and the salvation of the soul,* which our divine master has recommended to us as *the one thing needful.* How well this interpretation suits the greek word, φρονεῖν, used in all these places, you Sir, if at all conversant with greek writers, cannot but know. And if you are a stranger to them, which I would not suppose, I am sorry you have been misled by an English translation, to fasten an absurdity upon the sacred writer; as if he was childish enough to imagine, that intreaties could bring people to think alike in disputed points; and this without telling them, (which on your supposition must be the case,) what that one thing was, in which they were to think alike. Whereas on our easy and obvious interpretation there needed no such explication at all; as the exhortation referred to a charitable temper, recommended in a variety of strong expressions, and not to this or that particular sentiment. And, permit me to say, though by way of digression, would to God that these texts were rightly understood by christians in general; and that such a divine principle of mutual love, in consequence of our union in Christ, might prevail more, where we cannot in your sense be of one mind, nor unite in one external form, whether of worship, or discipline! I would hope, the attacks made on common christianity are in some measure leading us to this: And I earnestly pray, that infinite wisdom may over-rule that evil, to the production of so great a good.

The only scriptures in the catalogue which I gave above, which remain yet unhandled, are those which relate to our *becoming as little children, that we may enter into the kingdom of God**, and to the *captivating every thought to the obedience of Christ*†. The former of these passages stands more immediately opposed to ambitious views of worldly greatness, than to an overweaning opinion of our own understandings; though I readily acknowledge, that according to the genius of our Lord's teaching in general, it may well be considered as a warning

* Mat. xviii. 3. † 2 Cor. x. 5.

against the latter, to which the text in Corinthians does no doubt relate. But what can you infer from hence, to support the peculiarities of your doctrine? We readily grant you, that such texts remind us, of what indeed reason itself would teach, if impartially consulted, that when we have discovered the evidence of a divine revelation, which the natural weakness of our minds might engage us to wish, and to enquire after, we are teachably to submit to its instructions. We are to be sensible, that our own understandings, when compared with the supreme intelligence, are infinitely less than that of a little child, when compared with ours. We are therefore humbly and quietly to sit down, as it were, at the feet of the divine teacher; and though several plausible objections may arise in our minds, and many things taught may be inconsistent with our preconceived prejudices, and with what through their influence we should have expected, we are to suffer those prejudices to be over-ruled by so high an authority, and to acquiesce in this, that *the Lord hath said it:* And this is as really our duty, when he is speaking to us by his messengers, as it was theirs when he was speaking immediately to them. So that you can never infer from hence a personal, and much less a complete and instantaneous inspiration, till you have proved, either that I can never be assured that God speaks by another, or that if I am, I may disregard it, and dispute against it. The latter of which is so notoriously absurd, that I never heard it seriously maintained; and the former has been a thousand times confuted by those who have written in defence of christianity, and so lately in particular by those who have answered that unhappy creature who called himself the moral philosopher, that I need say nothing of it here, especially after what I have written in my former letters.

But I cannot dismiss the head, without reminding you of one important scripture, which illustrates the explication I have given of those last mentioned, with a beautiful variety of most proper expression. I mean that in the first epistle of Peter, where the apostle exhorts christians, that *laying aside all malignity, and debate, and hypocrisy, and envy, and calumny,* (so common among some who call themselves christians, and so often exercised against the most faithful and zealous ministers of the gospel,) they should *like new-born babes desire* (as we render it,) *the sincere milk of the word, that they might grow thereby**. It is in the *original,* το λογικον αδολον γαλα, *the rational*

* 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

fraudless milk: Which is as if he had said, " The instruction we give to those of you, who are yet but *little children in christianity*, is *sincere and unadulterated, as milk* that flows immediately from the breast of the mother into the mouth of the infant; and if you will exercise your reason honestly and wisely, you may easily see, how excellent and useful our doctrine and precepts are. Come then, with the gentleness and simplicity of little children, and receive them; while we are ready, with all the tenderness of an affectionate mother for her suckling, to impart them to you; *to impart, not only the gospel of God,* but, if it were possible, *even our own souls also, because you are dear unto us**."

This is indeed, according to the wise and affectionate expression of St. Paul, to be at once *in malice children, and in understanding men*†. For I can think of nothing so rational, as diligently to examine the credentials of any thing offered us as a *message from God,* and then humbly to submit to it without caviling and disputing, when we are satisfied that it wears the stamp of his authority. Whereas to set at nought all the internal and external evidence of christianity so often represented, insisting on it as the absolute condition of our believing, that it be immediately revealed to us from heaven by miraculous, perfect, and irresistible inspiration, is so far from looking like this infant simplicity, that it seems much more to savour of that malignity and haughtiness of temper, which such passages as these were intended to guard us against. So unhappy have you generally been, from first to last, in the choice of those scriptures by which you would just add some face of probability to a notion in itself so absurd, as that which you have advanced concerning the *illumination of the Spirit.*

There are several other scriptures, Sir, which, in the course of your harangue, you have occasionally touched upon; as if you thought they afforded some countenance to that notion: But the inference is so precarious, that one would really imagine, you mentioned them only with an intent to make your pamphlet as rich as possible in such kind of burlesque. I am sure you will acknowledge, that those I have already canvassed are the strength of your cause. However, for the vindication of the others from that injury you have offered them, I shall touch here, (by way of digression,) on two or three passages of scripture, which you, Sir, seem to have brought in merely for the

* 1 Thess. ii. 8. † 1 Cor. xiv. 20.

sake of exposing them to contempt: A contempt, of which I think they will appear by no means worthy, and consequently which may fall where it was least intended.

In your 66th page you refer to what is said of the Samaritans*, and tell us, "that it is recorded, *Many believed in Christ readily for the saying of the woman.*" And then you add, with great triumph, "A notable foundation truly for confidence and conviction, and perhaps martyrdom, &c." Now, Sir, it is hard to imagine, for what purpose this reflection could be introduced, unless it were to give a specimen of your good will to the scripture: It seems in effect telling the world, that you think St. John has assigned a very ridiculous reason for their faith, and consequently was a despicable writer, in this instance at least. I shall not insist on your quoting the text with the addition of the word *readily*, which is perhaps in italics by a mistake of the printer. But I desire it may be remembered, that we cannot infer from this expression, that these Samaritans were brought to a *true and saving faith in Christ*, so as to *continue in his word*, and approve themselves *his disciples indeed*; which you artfully take for granted, in your manner of putting the case. You will find little reason confidently to infer this, from its being said *they believed in him*, if you recollect, that the evangelist, but a few paragraphs before, (i. e. in the conclusion of his second chapter,) had spoken of many who believed in Christ, to whom *he would not commit himself, because he knew what was in man*†; i. e. he knew that their faith was not resolute and sincere, nor they persons on whose steadiness and fidelity he could depend. So it is very possible, that some of these Samaritans, knowing the woman, might from her report learn to conceive of Christ as an extraordinary person, from whom therefore they entertained some great expectation; though they might not have the resolution to follow him fully, as you suppose they would of course do, even to martyrdom. Indeed when Christ was come into their city, and had discoursed among them, we are told, that *many more believed, because of his own word*; and they declare, that *now they believed, not because of her saying, but because they had heard him themselves*‡; which intimates, that they looked on her testimony as a very small matter, when compared with the satisfaction which their personal converse with Christ had given them. And if any of the persons, who at first declared their regard to Christ on the testimony of the woman, could afterwards be so regardless of

* John iv. 39. † John ii. 24, 25. ‡ John iv. 41, 42.

him, as *not to give him the hearing*, though *he abode two days in their city*; it was surely a very bad specimen of that faith and zeal, which you think would have engaged them to lay down their lives in his cause; as it would plainly shew, that they apprehended themselves very little concerned with him, how extraordinary a person soever he might be.

Presently after you mention another text, as it seems much with the same pious design, namely, that in which our Lord upbraids the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, saying, *Oh fools, and slow of heart to believe! &c**. And then you add, "Can any one imagine, all this was merely because a narrative of four hours, had not wrought a thorough conviction?—Is it to be believed, that God would reproach any of his creatures with a *defective intellect*, when he was pleased to give them no better?" We have here, Sir, a complication of mistakes: The one (as in a former instance,) founded upon the impropriety of our translation, in rendering ανοητοι, fools, which (as I have elsewhere observed,†) ought to be translated, in a softer manner, thoughtless or inconsiderate creatures; which contains no reflection at all on the natural defect of their intellect, but on their culpable neglect of using the rational powers which they possessed. I cannot forbear adding, that if the miraculous illumination, which you suppose referred to, had been so irresistible and instantaneous, as you tell us it was, there would have been no room for any such reflection, and consequently the text would be left quite defenceless, which on the common interpretation admits of so easy a solution.—There is another error in supposing, as you do, that the ground of this gentle reprehension was only, "that a narrative of four hours had not wrought a thorough conviction‡." If you mean by a narrative of four hours, our Lord's discourse with them as they were walking to Emmaus, it is unlucky indeed. For not to say, how many hours this conversation might employ, which is not very material; it is certain, this reproof was previous to the principal part of this conversation, as you will easily see in the passage itself, and referred to the opportunities they had enjoyed for months and years before, of acquainting themselves with the

* Luke xxiv. 25. † Family Expositor. Note on Luke xxiv. 25.

‡ I find, since this Letter was gone to the press, the author is so conscious to himself, how little ground there was for this reflection, as to alter the passage in his second edition. But as he has not acknowledged any mistake, I did not think it needful to recal my papers, and shall leave the animadversion as it stands for those, who may have only seen the same edition I made use of in writing these remarks.

prophetic writings; which if they had diligently and impartially done, they would have judged it no incredible or improbable report, which they had received from the women who had been at the sepulchre, and affirmed that *Jesus was risen from the dead.*

I shall take notice but of two passages more, which you have in like manner disguised, that you might the more easily expose them. These are what you introduce in p. 73. where you say, "That the scripture-test and standard for finding out the spirit of truth is no more than this; *Hereby shall ye know them: Every one that confesseth that Christ is come in the flesh, is of God.* Now (say you) this is evidently what philosophers call *arguing in a circle*, and *begging the question*;" (which, by the way, are not quite synonymous terms:) "But in *faith* we see it is a necessary preliminary, *He that cometh to Christ, must believe that he is.*"—As to the latter part of this sentence, every body will perceive, that, however dignified by italics, it is a *scripture of your own making.* It is indeed said in the epistle to the Hebrews, that *he who cometh to God, must believe that he is**. The sense of which is plainly this, "that a persuasion of the *being of a God* must be the *foundation* of all *rational religion*, and particularly of all devotional addresses." And how a person of your sense could think of representing this as a circular argument, it is almost impossible to imagine; unless it were merely to humour the character you had assumed, of a christian whose rapturous and enthusiastical divinity might transport him into an entire forgetfulness of his logic, and perhaps teach him to reckon that forgetfulness among the special gifts of the Spirit, which he imagined he had received?—But as to the former, or to speak more properly the only text of scripture which you have here repeated, (for the other is merely burlesqued,) I mean that in John†, Archbishop Tillotson might long since have furnished you with an explication, which sets it above this cavil, which I confess, from the mere sound of the words, might easily present itself to the mind of a superficial reader. He justly observes, (if I remember his interpretation right,) that this epistle was written, when christianity had been for a considerable time settled in the world; and that it might now be considered as a test of doctrines, sufficiently confirmed by a train of most illustrious miracles, and a variety of other evidence. In consequence of this, a person, presuming to teach by any spirit, *that Jesus was not come in the flesh*, might as

* Heb. xi. 6. † 1 John iv. 2.

reasonably be rejected by christians, as a pretended prophet among the jews, who, upon the credit of a dream, or a vision, should attempt to draw them to idolatry. The evidence attending the mosaic religion was so vastly superior to that, which could be supposed to arise from any pretended dream, vision or sign, that he might be justly and reasonably rejected without looking into his credentials. But will this, Sir, at all prove, that these persons to whom the apostle addresses, received christianity at first without any evidence at all; laying it down as a first principle, thas it was true, and (resolving nevertheless to reason a little,) inferring from thence it was true, and roundly concluding, It is divine, because it is divine? This, Sir, is your candid representation of the matter: But I would hope, few reader's heads are weak enough, even after your whirl of words, to be turned round in this imaginary circle.

But to return from this digression, I shall proceed now to examine the only two arguments which I remember on the head I have been speaking to, that are yet unanswered; I mean, that from our being required to pray for the increase of our faith, and that which you draw from infant-baptism.

I readily grant you, (without cavilling at the argument as drawn from a particular scripture,) that it is our duty to *pray that our faith may be increased:* But I think no argument can be drawn from hence, to prove that it is not to be promoted by rational methods; any more than we can argue, that virtue is not to be rationally cultivated, because we are to pray for its growth in our souls. What I have already said of God's operating upon us as rational creatures, and in concurrence with the exercise of our own faculties, when compared with what I have said in my second letter, concerning the nature of true faith, is an abundant solution of this objection. Reasonably may we desire, that God would awaken our minds to diligence in searching after truth; that he would present the evidence of it before us in a clear and convincing light; that he would guard our hearts from those corrupt prejudices which might obstruct its entrance into them; and that he would remind us, from time to time, of those great religious truths which we do believe, with such spirit and energy, that our temper of life may, in a suitable manner, be influenced by the realizing persuasion. In such a prayer, methinks, every virtuous deist must join; as I firmly believe, that would men heartily join in it, and act accordingly, they would soon cease to be diests in the negative sense of the word. And in proportion to the degree in which we see evident reason to believe the truth of christianity, we may rea-

sonably pray, that God, by the influences of his Holy Spirit on our minds, would give us more comprehensive views of its evidence, and would impress a more lively sense of its great principles on our hearts; that our faith may not be a cold assent, but powerful in the production of its genuine fruits.

It is, on the other hand, very true, that a man, who does not see reason to believe the gospel to be a divine revelation, cannot rationally pray to be confirmed in that belief, or even to be brought to it; but it is evident, that whatever rule the scripture gives on this head, it gives to those who profess to admit its divine authority. And a search into rational evidence is so far from being inconsistent with such a prayer, that where doubts and difficulties arise in the mind, which, though they do not entirely destroy the assent, introduce perplexity, such enquiry is the wisest method we can take to secure an answer to our prayers; provided they be reverently, prudently, and candidly made. But this rather belongs to the subject of my first letter. What I have just now said may be sufficient to shew, that the scripture, if it encourages us to pray for the increase of faith, (which I readily allow that it does,) gives us no room at all to expect any new revelation in answer to those prayers, which is the only view in which the mention of them could be material to your cause.

I shall conclude this head with asking you seriously, whether you think Simplicius desired or expected an immediate revelation, like that which you describe, when he prays, "that God would accurately rectify the reason which he has given us, and remove the mist that hangs upon our understandings, that we may discern things human and divine!*" If you think such a prayer as this consistent with the use of reason, which he desires might be purified and guided, you will easily see, that we may on the very same principle pray for the increase of faith, without any of those enthusiastical apprehensions, which you represent as essential to christianity.

There yet remains to be considered the argument you draw from infant-baptism, which you apprehend would be very absurd, if it were not supposed to be attended with such a communication of the Spirit, as that which is now in debate between us. "Can a man," say you, "be baptized into a rational religion?" (by which I suppose you mean, can that religion be

* Ικεῖευω, Δεσποτα,—συμπραξα ως αυτο Κινητοις ημιν—προς διορθωσιν ακριβη τυ εν ημιν λογυ,—και αφειλειν τελειως την αχλυν των ψυχικων ημων ομματων, οφρα γινωσκομεν ευ—η μεν Θειον, ηδε και ανδρα. *Simplic.* Comment. *ad. fin.*

rational of which infant-baptism is a part?) "Where is reason concerned, when babes accept the terms of salvation by deputy, and are entitled to all the privileges of the most extensive faith by anothers act? By the baptismal ceremony they commence true believers at once, and are made heirs of heaven, you know, by the faith of their bondsmen." (p. 9.) And to the same purpose, in your 69th page, "The merits of the most finished conviction are already theirs by imputation, &c."

Now here, Sir, I am obliged to say, that if there be any form of baptism in the christian world, which justifies such inferences, and such a manner of speaking, I am extremely sorry for it. But I am very confident, the scripture teaches nothing of this kind; and it is by that, and not by the rubric of any particular church, whether popish or protestant, that the merits of this cause are to be tried.

I cannot see, how any sponsor, whether he be, or be not a parent, can pretend to answer for a child, that he shall believe, or obey the gospel: Nor does the bringing children to baptism, by any means imply it. What reason we have to conclude infant-baptism a rite of divine institution, I shall not now enquire. It is enough if I shew, that admitting it to be so, (which I really think it is very reasonable that we should admit,) it by no means implies this absurd consequence. Other ends might be answered by it, valuable enough to justify the wisdom of the ordinance: As for instance, hereby parents may give a public token of their faith in christianity, and their consequent desire that their children may partake of its benefits, and answer its demands: Hereby they may solemnly declare their resolution to train them up in the institutions of our Blessed Master, and their resignation of them to the disposal of divine providence, if God should see fit early to remove them: This also may remain, throughout all generations, as a memorial of the tenderness which our Lord shewed to little children, and of the perpetuity of that covenant, the efficacy of which reaches from one generation to another: And to add no more, it may lay a foundation for affectionate addresses to the children afterwards, as being already listed under the banners of Christ, so far as they could be listed by the act of another; so that they must either confirm, or, in effect at least, renounce what was then done. All these valuable purposes, and many more, may be answered by infant-baptism. But it will by no means follow from hence, that this rite affects the eternal state of the child; or that, if it did affect it, there must be such an extraordinary communication of the Spirit to

it, as you suppose. You allow, in express terms, that there is no act of the child at all, and that it believes nothing. How this consists with its having a perfect faith wrought in its mind at once, is not possible for me to conceive. I must therefore conclude, that you meant nothing more than to expose this practice, as you elsewhere expose persecution, by intimating that it cannot be defended, unless your doctrine were to be granted; whence you are sure, every thinking man, who yields to this part of your argument, will conclude, that it cannot be defended at all. On the other hand, it seems sufficient for me here to have shewn, that your notion is not connected with christianity, even allowing infant-baptism to be a part of it. May the time at length come, when a zeal for the honour of the gospel shall more effectually engage all its ministers, to adhere to the purity both of its doctrines and institutions, and not to overload it with those additions of their own, which furnish its adversaries with matter of triumph! In the mean time, may those adversaries consider, that they are answerable to God for the impartiality, with which they enquire into the contents of christianity, and that they are to take their notions of it from the New Testament alone! which if you, Sir, had been pleased to have done, you would never have mentioned this argument; nor from any thing you could have met with there, could you ever have thought of it.

Having thus dispatched the three grand articles of your pamphlet, I do not remember any thing very material in it, which I have left untouched; for little slips, which neither affect the main argument, nor the honour of the scripture, are not proper for the notice of one, who values his own time and his reader's, and seeks not to insult his antagonist, nor to expose him to any unnecessary contempt. Yet I cannot close without a remark or two, on what you insinuate, with so much disdain, concerning "the ingenious contrivance," (as you are pleased to call it,) "of abating the degree of evidence, to leave the more room for the merit of volunteers; with the duty of cultivating a pious propensity to the affirmative, soliciting the assent of our own minds, and endeavouring to help our unbelief." (p. 111.) This manner of representation is so ludicrous, that it is not easy to determine your meaning. But I suppose it to be this. Some considerable writers in favour of our religion have often said, what indeed many passages of scripture seem to favour, "that the degree of evidence attending it was wisely adjusted in such a manner, as to make it as a touch-stone to the temper of those to whom it came; and that instead of quarrelling with providence

for not giving it the greatest possible evidence, we ought rather to adore its wisdom in such an adjustment." This seems to be the notion you ridicule; and if it be, I wish, that for your own security from the rebound of ridicule ill-placed, you had condescended to shew its absurdity.—Seriously to maintain that such a sentiment is contemptible, would indeed be another stab at natural religion, as well as revealed. Do you imagine it, Sir, impossible, that the blessed God should have given any more convincing proofs of his Being and Perfections, than those which every man now actually sees? I grant, these proofs are sufficient, to convince any reasonable person: But I ask it again, whether God could not contrive any which should be more striking, and in fact more effectual? To say, that he could not, is limiting the Holy One of Israel in so foolish and so profane a manner, that I hope, Sir, you would abhor the imputation of it: And to own, that he could have done it, and yet has omitted it, if at the same time he acts wisely, is in effect owning the notion you so scornfully reject; or, in other words, owning that an evidence attempered and abated in a certain degree is such, as it is fit for God to give, and to prefer, in many instances, to higher degrees in their own nature very possible.—And where, I beseech you, Sir, is the absurdity of thus trying men's integrity, any more than of trying their other virtues in the course of life? Is it not possible, there may be a certain degree of pride, or of licentiousness, so odious to God, that he should give even to his own revelation, only such a degree of evidence, as he knows such persons will, through the free and criminal abuse of their own faculties, be ready to reject with scorn; while persons of a more humble and ingenuous temper will see and submit to it? Nay, I will add, must it not of course be so in the nature of things, that the internal evidence of any revelation must strike those minds most, which have the truest taste of moral excellency.—One would have thought, that what the sagacious author of the analogy between reason and religion has there said on this subject, might have engaged any one who has read it, as you intimate you have done, to treat the topic with more respect; and I shall remit you to a repeated perusal of that solid and useful treatise, with only this one farther question; "Whether you do not think there is such a thing in the human heart, as the counter-part to the character you deride,—an impious propensity to the negative, a soliciting the dissent of our own minds, and an endeavouring to promote our own unbelief?" If you think, the will has no remote influence upon the understanding as to its enquiry

into truth, and that corrupt affections never lead a man into error, from which (had his heart been more upright,) he might easily have been preserved, you contradict not only yourself, (compare p. 63, 64.) but the common sense and experience of mankind; and introduce an universal fatality, that worst of monsters, which will swallow up virtue and religion together, and leave the mind an easy prey to every error, and to every vice, which will owe its cheap victory to the air of irresistibility, with which it makes its appearance.

And is this, Sir, after all, the situation, in which you would wish to leave the mind of your reader? or is it such a situation that a wise and benevolent man, would think it worthy of his time and labour, to endeavour to bring his own mind, and that of others into it; I would intreat you, Sir, at parting, seriously to consider, how far you would have reason to rejoice in the success of what you have written, if it should be thus successful. I should think nothing more instructive and edifying to you, than to pause on the consequences. You would indeed thereby gain a triumph: But would you if you were a soldier, for the sake of that, lay your country in ruins? And what else would your success in this controversy do? Let us suppose men convinced, that neither christianity, nor natural religion, are capable of being rationally defended, or (if you like the expression better,) *are not founded on argument:* And what follows? You would indeed thereby free some, for whom it is possible you may have some peculiar concern, from the anxiety which the secret apprehensions of religion give them, in the pursuit of their prohibited pleasures: Yet could you not secure them entirely from some recoilings of heart, and anguish of conscience, which will sometimes be thrown into convulsions even by these very opiates. At least, in the intervals of these agonies, you would embolden them to lay the reins on the neck of appetite and passion, which, where human laws, or an innate generosity of temper did not restrain, would trample down every other obstacle, and drive on to the ruin of society. And as for those who are truly religious, you would, as Tully speaks, on supposition of a much smaller evil, (the ruin of friendship,) *take the very sun out of their heaven.* You would destroy the entertainment of their solitude, the cement of their friendship, the joy of their prosperity, the support of their adversity, the light of their life, the hope of their death; and would leave the most pious mind, of all others the most desolate. For what desolation can be imagined equal, or comparable, to that of falling from so high a hope, from so glorious a prospect, into the gloomy, cheerless,

and hopeless state, in which a mind destitute of religion must of necessity find itself? If this, Sir, were to be the certain effect of reading your book, (as I think it must be, if the principles of it were to be admitted, and its consequences pursued;) what a calamity must it have been to any wise and good man to meet with it? I shall not aggravate at large, but only add, that to have been, though ever so undesignedly, the instrument of such mischief, the fatal occasion of grieving the good, of hardening the bad, of subverting religion, and, by an inseparable consequence, of dishonouring God, and of ruining men, is certainly to be numbered among the most lamentable evils.

It is possible, indeed, that you did not lay a plot for all this. If you will permit me, Sir, to speak with all plainness and freedom, I am ready in my own judgment to conclude, from comparing one thing with another, that you are a kind of humorous sceptic, who intended chiefly to amuse the world, and to shew your address in puzzling the cause, and attacking christianity in a peculiar disguise, which you apprehend you could manage artfully, on a side which seemed to you most open. Perhaps you attended to no farther consequence, than that some of your readers would smile, and some of them would be confounded, and many say you had played your part in a dexterous manner, and cut out work for divines, who, amidst the variety of forms you assume, might find it more difficult to deal with you, than with an enemy who more openly declares war, and wears a habit by which he may more certainly be known. Views like these may amuse and animate a light imagination, and it may look no farther. But the effect of action depends not on our foresight. This is certain; either religion, both natural and revealed, must be judged irrational; or your book, whatever were meant by it, must be judged pernicious, and must draw after it a very solemn account in the presence of God. I heartily pray, you may be thoughtful of that account in time, and dismiss you, as you did your young correspondent, with a text of scripture, which contains an admonition, the weight of which no intelligent heathen could question. How gaily soever you may have affected to sport yourself, with these important topics, *Be not deceived, for God is not mocked;* but *whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.* A harvest of future glory, I suppose, no man in our age and country expects to secure by opposing christianity; and I will venture to say, that, so far as I can learn, few of its enemies, various as their forms, and specious as some of their pretences may have been, have for the present raised

the character of their knowledge, or of their virtue, among the best judges and examples of both, by any attack they have made upon it. And if you, Sir, how considerable soever your natural talents may be, should prove the first exception to this general remark, it will be a great surprise to

Your most humble Servant,

P. DODDRIDGE.

Northampton, March 4, 1742-3.

A

PLAIN AND SERIOUS

ADDRESS

TO THE

MASTER OF A FAMILY,

ON THE

IMPORTANT SUBJECT

OF

FAMILY RELIGION.

A

PLAIN AND SERIOUS ADDRESS, &c.

SIR,

YOU may easily apprehend, that the many interruptions to which personal visits are liable, make it difficult for ministers to find a convenient time, in which they may apply themselves suitably and largely to those committed to their care; or at least, if they resolve to do it, will necessarily make their progress through large congregations very slow. I therefore take this method of visiting you while alone, and of addressing you on the very important subject of family religion. For your own sake, and the sake of those dearest to you, I intreat you to give me a calm attentive hearing. And I would particularly desire, that if it be by any means practicable, (as with little contrivance and resolution I hope it may,) you would secure one hour on the morning of the Lord's-day after you receive it, not merely to run over this letter in a cursory manner, but deliberately to weigh and consider it, and to come to some determination, as in the sight of God, that you will, or that you will not, comply with the petition which it brings; if I may not rather say, with the demand which in his name it makes upon you.

As I purpose to deliver it to every master of a family under my stated care, or to every mistress where there is no master, (that no offence of any kind may be taken, which it is in my power to prevent,) I know it will come to many, who have long been exemplary for their diligence and zeal in the duties I am recommending; to many, whom their own experience hath instructed in the pleasures and advantages which flow from them; an experience, which will inforce them more effectually than any thing which it is possible for me to say. Such will, I hope, by what they read, be confirmed in pursuing the good resolution they have taken, and the good customs they have formed; and will also be excited more earnestly to endeavour to contribute towards introducing the like, into other families over which they have any influence, and especially into those which may branch out from their own, by the settlement of children or servants. In this view, as well as to awaken their thankfulness to divine grace, which hath inclined them to the

discharge of their duty in so great, yet so frequently neglected, an article of it, I hope the heads of praying families will not peruse this letter in vain. But it is intended as an address to those, who have hitherto lived in the omission of it: And if there were but one such master of a family under my care, I would gladly submit to the labour in which I am now engaging for his sake alone. To such therefore I now turn myself; and Oh that divine grace might engage every one of such a character to hear me with attention, and might enforce upon his conscience the weight of reasons, the evidence of which the lowest may receive, and to which it is impossible that the highest should find any thing solid to object!

Oh my dear friend, whoever you are, (for I know no one under my care to whom I may not address that appellation,) give me leave to tell you plainly, that while I write this I have that awakening scripture in my view: *Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the* FAMILIES THAT CALL NOT ON THY NAME.* I appeal to you as a man of ordinary sense and understanding, (as it needs no more,) to judge whether this do not strongly imply that it may be taken for granted, every family, which is not a heathen family, which is not quite ignorant of the living and true God, *will call upon his name.* Well may it then pain my heart, to think that there should be a professedly christian family, whom this dreadful character suits. Well may it pain my heart, to think of the divine fury, which may be poured out on the heads and on the members of it: And well may it make me desirous, to do my utmost to secure you and yours, from every appearance, from every possibility of such danger. Excuse the earnestness with which I may address you. I really fear, lest *while you delay*, the *fire* of the divine displeasure should *fall upon you*†: And as I adore the patience of God in having thus long suspended the storm, I am anxious about every hour's delay, lest it should fall the heavier.

I will therefore, as plainly and seriously as I can, endeavour to convince you of your duty, if peradventure you are not already secretly convinced of it; as truly I believe, most who neglect it, under the regular administration of gospel ordinances, are.—I will then touch on a few of those objections, which have been pleaded to excuse in some degree so shameful an omission.—And this will naturally lead me to conclude with a few hints, which may serve by way of direction, for the proper introduction and discharge of the services to which I am endeavouring to engage you.

I mean not to handle the subject at large, which would

* Jer. x. 25. † Gen. xix. 16, 17.

afford abundant matter for a considerable volume; as indeed several volumes have been written upon it, by divines of different denominations, who, however various in other opinions, agree here; as what intelligent christian can disagree? But I mean to suggest a few plain things, which it is evident you have not sufficiently considered, and which if duly weighed, may by the blessing of God answer my present purpose. Now the arguments I shall propose will be such, that if you will not regard them, little is to be hoped from any other: For surely the mind of man can discover none of greater and more universal importance; though I readily acknowledge, that many others might inforce them with greater energy and address. Yet if the desire, the most earnest desire of succeeding can add any of the proper arts of persuasion, they will not be wanting here. And I would fain speak, as one who considers, how much of the glory of God, how much of your own happiness, and that of your dear children, for time and eternity, depends on the success of what I am now to lay before you.

What I desire and intreat of you is, that you would honour and acknowledge God in your families, by calling them together every day, to hear some part of his word read to them, and to offer, for a few minutes at least, your united confessions, prayers and praises to him. And is this a cause, that should need to be pleaded at large by a great variety of united motives? Truly the petition seems so reasonable, and a compliance with it from one who has not quite renounced religion might seem so natural, that one would think the bare proposing it might suffice. Yet experience tells us, it is much otherwise. This letter will come into the hands of some, who, though they maintain a public profession of religion, have been again and again exhorted to it in vain, and that perhaps for succeeding years. I might say a great deal to upbraid such especially, on account of this neglect; but I rather chuse to intreat to the future performance of the duty; humbly hoping, that, criminal as former negligence has been, a gracious God will mercifully forgive it, to those who repent and desire to reform.

And Oh that I could engage you to this, by representing in the plainest, kindest, and most affectionate manner, the reasonableness, and advantage of this duty! For if it be reasonable, if it be evidently advantageous, there are numberless general precepts of scripture, which must comprehend and inforce it, if it were less immediately supported than it is by particular passages; which yet, as I shall presently shew, do many of them strongly recommend it to us.

Consider, Sir, for I address myself to every particular person, seriously consider the apparent reasonableness of family religion. Must not your consciences presently tell you, it is fit that persons who receive so many mercies together, should acknowledge them together? Can you in your own mind be satisfied, that you and your nearest relatives should pay no joint homage to that God, who hath set you in your family, and who hath given to you, and to the several members of it so many domestic enjoyments? your Creator and theirs, your preserver and theirs, your daily benefactor and theirs? Can it be right, if you have any sense of these things each of you in your own hearts, that the sense of them should be concealed and smothered there, and that you should never join in your grateful acknowledgments to him? Can you imagine it reasonable, that when you have a constant dependence upon him for so many mercies, without the concurrence of which your family would be a scene of misery, you should never present yourselves together in his presence, to ask them at his hand? Upon what principles is public worship to be recommended and urged, if not by such as have their proportionable weight here?

Indeed the force of these considerations hath not only been known and acknowledged by the people of God in all ages; we have not only Noah and Abraham, Joshua and David, Job and Daniel, each under a much darker dispensation than ours, as examples of it: But we may venture to say, that wherever there has been a profession of any kind of religion, it has been brought into private houses as well as public temples. The poor heathens, as we certainly know from the remaining monuments of them, had their lares and their penates, which were household images, some of them in private chapels, and others about the common hearth, where the family used to worship them by frequent prayers and sacrifices. And the brass, and wood, and stone, of which they consisted, shall (as it were) cry out against you, shall rise up against you and condemn you, if while you call yourselves the worshippers of the one living and eternal God, and boast of the revelation you have received by his prophets and by his Son, you presume to omit an homage, which the stupid worshippers of such vanities as these failed not to present to them, while they called them their Gods. Be persuaded then I beseech you, to be consistent in your conduct. Either give up all pretences to religion, or maintain a steady and uniform regard to it, at home as well as abroad, in the family, as well as in the closet, or at church. But the reasonableness of this duty, and the obligations which bind you in conscience to the practice of it, will farther appear, if you consider,

The many advantages, which will, by the divine blessing, attend a proper discharge of it. And here, I would more particularly represent the good influence, which family devotions are likely to have,—upon the young persons committed to your care,—upon your own hearts,—and upon the advancement of a general reformation, and the propagation of religion to those that are yet unborn.

Consider in the first place, what is most obvious, the happy influence which the duty I am recommending might have upon the young members of your family, the children and servants committed to your care. For I now consider you, as a parent, and a master. The father of a family is a phrase, that comprehends both these relations; and with great propriety, as humanity obliges us to endeavour to take a parental care of all under our roof. And indeed,

You ought to consider your servants, in this view, with a tender regard. They are probably in the flower of life, for that is the age which is commonly spent in service; and you should recollect how possible it is, that this may be, if rightly improved, the best opportunity their whole life may afford them for learning religion, and being brought under the power of it. If your servants are already instructed in it, by being brought up in families where these duties have been maintained; let them not, if they should finally miscarry, have cause to impute it to you, and to testify before God in the day of their condemnation, "that it was under your roof that they learnt the neglect and forgetfulness of God, and of all that their pious parents, perhaps in a much inferior station of life to you, had in earlier days been attempting to teach them; to teach them, in moments taken from labour, or from repose almost necessary for their subsistence." On the other hand, if they come to you quite ignorant of religion, (as if they come from prayerless families, it is very probable that they do,) have compassion upon them, I entreat you, and endeavour to give them those advantages which they never yet had; and which it is too probable, as things are generally managed, they never will have, if you will not afford them.

But I would especially, if I might be allowed to borrow the pathetic words of Job*, *intreat you by the children of your own body*. I would now as it were present them all before you, and beseech you by all the bowels of parental affection, (which I have myself so strongly felt,) that to all the other tokens of tenderness and love, you would not refuse to add this, without which many of the rest may be worse than in vain.

* Job xix. 17.

Give me leave to plead with you, as the instruments of introducing them into being. Oh remember, it is indeed a debased and corrupted nature you have conveyed to them. Consider, that the world, into which you have been the means of bringing them, is a place in which they are surrounded with many temptations, and in which, as they advance in life, they must expect many more, so that in plain terms, it is on the whole much to be feared, that they will perish in the ignorance and forgetfulness of God, if they do not learn from you to love and serve him. For how can it be expected they should learn this at all, if you give them no advantages for receiving and practising the lesson at home?

And let me further urge and intreat you to remember, that these dear children, whose tender age, and perhaps amiable forms and dispositions, might attract the affection and solicitude of strangers, are committed to your especial and immediate care by God their Creator. And he has made them thus dependent upon you, and others that have in their infancy and childhood the care of them, that there might be hereafter a better opportunity of forming their minds, and of influencing them to a right temper and conduct. And can this by any means be effectually done, if you do not at proper times call them together, to attend to the instructions of the word of God, and to join in solemn prayers and supplications to him? At least is it possible, it should be done any other way with equal advantage, if this be not added to the rest?

Family worship is a most proper way of teaching children religion, as you teach them language, by insensible degrees; a little one day and a little another; for to them, line must be upon line, and precept upon precept. They may learn to conceive aright of the divine perfections, when they hear you daily acknowledging and adoring them: Their hearts may be early touched with pious remorse for sin, when they hear your confession poured out before God: They will know what mercies they are to ask for themselves, by observing what turn your petitions take: Your intercessions may diffuse into their minds a spirit of love to mankind, a concern for the interest of the church, and of their country; and, what is not I think by any means to be neglected, sentiments of loyalty towards our sovereign and his family, when they hear you daily invoking the divine blessing upon them: And your solemn thanksgivings for the bounties of providence, and for benefits of a spiritual nature, may affect their hearts with those gracious impressions towards the gracious author of all, which may excite in their little breasts love to him, the most noble and genuine

principle of all true and acceptable religion. Thus they may become christians by insensible degrees, and grow in the knowledge and love of the truth, as they do in stature.

By observing your reverent and solemn deportment, (as reverent and solemn I hope it will always at such seasons be,) they may get some notion of an invisible Being, before they are of age to understand the definition of the term God; and may feel their minds secretly impressed with an humble awe and veneration, before they can explain to you their sense of it. And whatever instructions you give them concerning his nature and his will, and the way of obtaining his favour by Jesus Christ, all your admonitions relating to the importance of that invisible world we are going to, and the necessary preparation for it, will be greatly illustrated by the tenour of your daily devotions, as well as by those excellent lessons which the word of God, when solemnly read to them morning and evening, will afford. Nor is it by any means to be forgotten, that while they hear themselves, and their own concerns, mentioned before God in prayer, while they hear you earnestly pleading for the divine blessing upon them, (especially if it be in expressions wisely varied, as some particular occurrences in their lives and in yours may require,) it may very probably be a means of moving their impressible hearts; as it may powerfully convince them of your deep and tender concern for their good, and may add great weight to the instructions you may address to them: So that it may appear, even *while you are praying for them*, that God *hears**. And indeed I have known some instances of excellent persons, who have dated their conversion to God, even after they had begun visibly to degenerate, from the prayers, from the serious and pathetic prayers, which they have heard their pious fathers, perhaps I might add their pious mothers, presenting before God on their account.

Indeed were this duty properly attended to, it might be expected, that all christian families would, according to their respective sizes and circumstances, become nurseries of piety; and you would see in the most convincing view, the wisdom of providence, in making human infants so much more dependent on their parents, and so much more incapable to shift for themselves, than the offspring of inferior creatures are.

Let me then intreat you, my dear friend, to look on your children the very next time you see them, and ask your own heart, how you can answer it to God, and to them, that you deprive them of such advantages as these? Advantages, without which it is to be feared, your care of them in other respects will

* Isa. lxv. 24.

turn to but little account, should they be ever so prosperous in life. For what is prosperity in life without the knowledge, and fear, and love of God? what, but the poison of the soul, which swells and kills it? what, but the means of making it more certainly, more deeply, more intolerably miserable; when all its transient and empty amusements are passed away, *like a dream, when one awaketh**? In short, not to mention the happy influence it may have on their temporal affairs, by drawing down the divine blessing, and by forming their minds to those virtues, which pave the way to wealth and reputation, health and contentment, which make no enemies, and attract many friends; it is, with respect to the eternal world, the greatest cruelty to your children thus to neglect giving them those advantages, which no other cares in education itself exclusive of these can afford: And it is impossible, you should ever be able to give them any other equivalent. If you do your duty in this respect, they will have reason to bless you living and dying; and if you neglect it, take care that you and they come not, in consequence of that neglect, into a world, where (horrid as the thought may now seem,) you will for ever be cursing each other. And thus I am fallen insensibly, because so naturally, from what I was saying of the concern and interest of those under your care, to your own, so far as it may be distinguished from theirs.

Let me therefore press you to consider, how much your own interest is concerned in the matter; the whole of your interest, both spiritual and temporal.

Your spiritual interest is infinitely the greatest, and therefore I will begin with that. And here let me seriously ask you, do you not need those advantages for religion, which the performance of family duty will give you, added to those of a more secret and a more public nature, if peradventure they are regarded by you? These instructions, these adorations, these confessions, these supplications, these intercessions, these thanksgivings, which may be so useful to your children and servants, may they not be useful to yourselves? May not your own hearts have some peculiar advantage for being impressed, when you are the mouth of others in these domestic devotions, beyond what in a private station of life it is otherwise possible you should have? Oh these lessons of religion to your own souls, every morning and evening, might be (if I may be allowed the expression,) either the seed, or foretaste, of salvation to you. Nay, the remoter influence they may have on your conduct, in other respects, and at other times, when considered merely in the general as religious

* Psal. lxxiii. 20.

exercises performed by you in your family, is to be recollected as an argument of vast importance.

A sense of common decency would engage you, if you pray with your family, to avoid a great many evils, which would appear doubly evil in a father or a master, who kept up such religious exercises in his house. I will not now, Sir, speak of yourself, for I would not offend by supposing any thing grossly bad of you. But do you imagine, that if reading the scripture and family prayer were introduced into the houses of some of your neighbours, drunkenness and lewdness, and cursing and swearing, and profaning the Lord's-day, would not, like so many evil dæmons, be quickly driven out? The master of the family would not for shame indulge them, if he had nothing more than the form of duty kept up; and his reformation, though only external, and at first on a kind of constraint, would carry with it the reformation of many more, who have such a dependence on his favour as they would not sacrifice, though by a madness very prevalent among the children of men they can venture to sacrifice their souls to every trifle.

And may it not perhaps be your more immediate concern, to recollect, that if you prayed with your family, you would *yourself* be more careful to *abstain from all appearance of evil**? You would find out a way to suppress that turbulency of passion, which may now be ready to break out before you are aware, and other imprudences, in which your own heart would check you by saying, "Does this become one, that is by and by to kneel down with his domestics, his children and servents, and adore God with them, and pray against every thing which displeases God, and makes us unfit for the heavenly world?" I will not say this will cure every thing that is wrong; but I believe you are already persuaded, it would often have a very good influence. And I fear, it is the secret desire of indulging some irregularities without such a restraint, that, infamous as such a victory is, hath driven out family prayer from several houses where it was once maintained, and hath excluded it from others. But if you have any secret disinclination of heart rising against it in this view, it becomes you seriously to take the alarm; for, to speak plainly, I have hardly known a blacker symptom of damnation, than a fear of being restrained in the commission of sin.

After this it may seem a matter of smaller importance, to urge the good influence which a proper discharge of family duty may have upon your own temporal affairs; both by restraining you from many evils, and engaging you to a proper conduct

* 1 Thess. v. 22.

yourself, and also by impressing your children and servants with a sense of religion. And it is certain, the more careful they are of their duty to God, the more likely they will be to perform their duty to you. Nor can any thing strengthen your natural authority among them more, than your presiding in such solemnities, if supported by a suitable conduct. But I would hope, nobler motives will have a superior weight. And therefore waving this topic, I intreat you as the last argument to consider,

The influence it may have on a general reformation, and on the propagation of religion to those who are yet unborn. You ought to consider every child and servant in your family, as one who may be a source, not only of life, but (in some degree) of character and happiness, to those who are hereafter to arise into being; yea, whose conduct may in part affect those that are to descend from them in the following generation. If they grow up, while under your eye, ignorant of religion, they will certainly be much less capable of teaching it to others; for these are the years of discipline, and if they be neglected now, there is little probability of their receiving after-instruction. Nor is this all the evil consequence; for it is highly probable, that they will think themselves authorised by your example to a like negligence, and so you may entail heathenism under disregarded christian forms, on your descendents and theirs in ages to come. Whereas your diligence and zeal might be remembered, and imitated by them, perhaps when you are in your grave; and the stock which they first received from you, might with rich improvements be communicated to great numbers, so that one generation after another might learn to fear and serve the Lord. On the whole, God only knows what a church may arise from one godly family, what a harvest may spring up from a single seed; and on the other hand, it is impossible to say, how many souls may at length perish by the treacherous neglect of a single person, and to speak plainly, by your own.

These, Sir, are the arguments I had to plead with you, and which I have selected out of many more: And now give me leave seriously to ask you, as in the presence of God, whether there be not on the whole an unanswerable force in them? And if there be, what follows, but that you immediately yield to that force, and set up family worship this very day. For methinks, I would hardly thank you for a resolution to do it to-morrow, so little do I expect from that resolution. How can you excuse yourself in the continued omission? Bring the matter before God: He will be the final judge of it; and if you cannot debate the question as in his presence, it is a sign of a bad cause, and of a bad heart too; which is conscious of the badness of the

cause, and yet will not give it up, nor comply with a duty, of your obligations to which you are secretly convinced, and yet in effect say, "I will go on in this sin, and venture the consequence." Oh it is a dreadful venture, and will be found in effect *provoking the Lord to jealousy, as if you were stronger than he**.

But perhaps there may arise in your mind some objections, which may in some degree break the force of this conviction, and which in that view it may be expedient for me to discuss a little, before I dismiss the subject and close my address to you. You may perhaps be ready to object,

1. "That family prayer is not in so many words commanded in scripture; and therefore however expedient in some cases, it cannot be so universal and so important a duty, as we represent it."

I answer plainly, that it is strongly recommended in scripture, and consequentially commanded; as there are precepts, which plainly include, though they do not particularly express it. And I appeal to yourself in this matter. When God is represented as giving this reason to his angels for a particular favour to be bestowed on Abraham, because *he knew, that he would command his children and household to keep the way of the Lord, that he might obtain the blessing promised*†; did he not intend to declare his approbation of the care he took to support religion in his family? And can it be supported in a total neglect of prayer?—Again, do you not in your conscience think, that the spirit of God meant, that we should take Joshua for an example, when he tells us, that he resolved, and publicly declared the resolution, *that he and his house would serve the Lord* ‡; which must express a religious care of his family too?—Do you not believe, that this blessed Spirit meant it as a commendation of Job, that he *offered sacrifices for all his children* §; Sacrifices, undoubtedly attended with prayers; when he feared lest the gaiety of their hearts in their successive feastings might have betrayed them into some moral evil?—And was it not to do an honour to David, that the scripture informs us, that he *went home to bless his household* ‖; that is, to perform some solemn act of domestic worship, when he had been spending the whole day in public devotions?—What think you of the example of Daniel, who *prayed in his house, with his windows open toward Jerusalem*¶, and would rather run the risk of being cast into the den of lions, and being torn in pieces by those cruel beasts, than he would either omit or conceal it?—And do you think, that when our blessed Lord, whose whole life was em-

* 1 Cor. x. 22. † Gen. xviii. 19. ‡ Josh. xxiv. 15. § Job i. 5. ‖ 2 Sam. vi. 20. ¶ Dan. vi. 10.

ployed in religious services, so frequently *took his disciples apart to pray with them*, that he did not intend this as an example to us, of praying with those under our special care, or in other words, with the members of our own family, who are most immediately so?—Or can you by any imaginable artifice delude yourself so far as to think, that when we are solemnly charged and commanded to pray *with all prayer and supplication**, this kind of prayer is not included in that apostolical injunction?

On the whole, the question lies in a very little room. Have I proved by what I have said before, that family prayer is a reasonable thing? That it has a tendency to promote the honour of God, and the interest of religion, and your own salvation, with that of those who are committed to your care? If you are really convinced of this, then all the general precepts which require the love of God and your neighbour, all that recommend a regard to the interest of Christ, and a concern for our own everlasting happiness, bind it in this connection as certainly upon us, as if it had been commanded in words as express as those, in which we are required† *to enter into our closets, and there to pray to our Father which is in secret*§.

And I will farther add, that if the care of family religion be, (as I suppose every man's conscience will secretly testify that it is,) a proper part of a religious education, then all those many passages of scripture which recommend this, must in all reason be understood as including that. But perhaps you may be ready to plead,

2. "That it is *generally neglected.*"

Yet scarce can you have made or thought of this objection, but you will see at the first glance, that this must turn upon yourself, rather than on the whole appear favourable to your cause. It is the reproach of our age, if it be indeed generally neglected. And if it be generally excluded from the families of the rich and the great, (who too frequently set the fashion, where they are most apt to set it wrong,) let it rather awaken a generous indignation in our breast, to think that it is so excluded. At least, let it awaken a holy zeal to exert ourselves so much the more, as it is certain that no association in vice can secure those that join in it: For it is expressly said, *though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished*‡. So will your obedience be the more acceptable, in proportion to the degree in which it is singular. Were there not one praying family in the whole nation, in the whole world, methinks it should instigate you to the practice, rather than tempt you to

* Eph. vi. 18. † Mat. vi. 6. ‡ Prov. xi. 21.

§ This part of the argument is enforced with peculiar strength by that great and excellent writer Mr. Howe, in his posthumous Sermons on the subject; which I earnestly recommend to every reader that can get an opportunity of perusing them.

the neglect, and you should press on as ambitious of the glory of leading the way: For what could be a nobler object of ambition, than to be pointed out by the blessed God himself, as Job was; of whom he said, with a kind of triumph, *Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the land,* or even *on the earth** ? But blessed be God, this supposed universal neglect is far from being the case. Let it however, rejoice us, if God may say, "There are such and such families distinguishable from those in the neighbourhood on this account; as prevalent as the neglect of family prayer is, they have the resolution to practise it, and, like my servant Daniel, fear not the reproach and contempt which profane and ungodly men may cast upon them, if they may but honour me and engage my favour: *I know them; I hearken and hear, and a book of remembrance is written before me for them that fear me, and think on my name*†." Nor should you urge,

3. "That you have *so much business of another kind,* as not to be able to attend to this."

I might cut this objection short at once, by applying to your conscience, whether you have not time for many other things, which you know to be of much less importance. How many hours in a week do you find for amusement, while you have none for devotion in your family? And do you indeed hold the blessing of God so very cheap, and think it a matter of so little importance, that you conclude your business must succeed the worse, if a few minutes were daily taken solemnly to seek it together? Let me rather admonish you, that the greater your business is, the more need you have to pray earnestly, that your hearts may not be ingrossed by it. And I would beg leave further to remind you, that if your hurry of business were indeed so great as the objection supposes, (which I believe is seldom the case,) prudence alone might suggest, that you should endeavour to contract it. For there are certain boundaries, beyond which a wise and faithful care cannot extend; and as an attempt to go beyond these boundaries has generally its foundation in avarice, it often has its end in poverty and ruin. But if you were ever so secure of succeeding for this world, how dear might you and your children pay for that success, if all the blessed consequences of family religion, for time, and for eternity, were to be given up as the price of that very small part of your gains, which is owing to the minutes you take from these exercises, that you may give them to the world? For you plainly perceive the question is only about them, and by no means about a strenuous application to the

* Job. i. 8. † Mal. iii. 16.

proper duties of your secular calling through the day. And if you will be rich upon such profane terms as are here supposed, (for truly I can call them no better than profane,) you will probably plunge yourself into final perdition, and may in the mean time *pierce yourself through with many sorrows**; while religious families learn by blessed experience, that *the blessing of the Lord*, which they are so oftem imploring together *maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow with it*† ; or that *a little with the fear of the Lord is better than great treasure, with* that intermingled *trouble*‡, which in the neglect of God must necessarily be expected. But I conclude that yet more will be objecting,

4. "That they *want ability* for a work of this kind."

To this I must in the first place reply, that where the heart is rightly disposed, it does not require any uncommon abilities to discharge family worship in a decent and edifying manner. *The heart of a wise* and good *man*, in this respect, *teacheth his mouth, and addeth knowledge to his lips*§ ; and *out of the fulness of it*, when it is indeed full of pious affections, *the mouth will* naturally *speak*‖. And if it speak naturally, and in the main properly, it is enough. There is no need at all of speaking elegantly. The plainest and simplest language, in addresses to the Majesty of heaven, appears to me far preferable to laboured, pompous, and artificial expressions. Plain short sentences, uttered just as they rise in the mind, will be best understood by them that join with you. And it should on such occasions be our endeavour, to let ourselves down, as much as possible, to the understanding of the least and meanest of them : And this will in itself be more pleasing to God, than any thing which should proceed from ostentation and parade.

I must also desire you to consider, how many helps you may easily procure. The scripture is a large and noble magazine of the most proper sentiments, and most expressive language ; which, if you will attend to it with a becoming regard, will soon *furnish you for every good word and work*, and most apparently for this. And besides this, we have in our language a great variety of excellent *forms of prayer*, for families as well as for private persons¶ ; which you may use, at least at first, with great profit. And if it be too laborious to you to learn them by heart, or if having learnt them you dare not trust your memory, what should forbid your reading them reverently and

* 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. † Prov. x. 22. ‡ Prov. xv. 16. § Prov. xvi. 23. ‖ Luke vi. 45.

¶ I must beg leave on this occasion to mention and recommend two excellent collections of this kind, Jenkes's Devotions, and the Family Prayer Book, printed for Mr. Waugh. Readers of almost every taste may find themselves suited by one or the other of these ; and there are many admirably devout and judicious forms in both, which I should think every wise and good man might hear with pleasure and improvement, and to every clause of which he might put his most hearty *Amen*.

devoutly? I hope I shall give no offence to any good christian by saying, but on this occasion I should offend my conscience by not saying, that I have long thought an irreconcileable aversion to *forms of prayer*, even of human composition, as vain a superstition, as a passionate attachment to them. And if any had rather, that a family should be prayerless, than that a well chosen form should be gravely and solemnly read in it, I think he judges as absurdly, as if he would rather see them starving to death, than fed out of a dish whose materials or shape are disagreeable to him. The main thing is, that God be reverently and sincerely adored, that suitable blessings, temporal and spiritual, be sought from him for ourselves and others, and cordial thanksgivings returned to him for the various gifts of his continual bounty: And if this be done, the circumstances of doing it, though I cannot think them quite indifferent, are comparatively of small importance. I know by sure experience, in a great variety of instances, that it is very possible for christians of no extraordinary genius, and with a very low education, to acquit themselves honourably in prayer without the assistance of forms: And they who at first need them may, and probably, if they seriously set about it, would soon outgrow that need. But if they did not, God might be glorified, and families edified, by the continued use of such helps. And on the whole, if it be indeed come to this, that you will rather sacrifice all the benefits of family prayer, than submit to the trouble of reading, or appointing another to read, a well composed address, which perhaps, with a small portion of scripture before it, might not take up one quarter of an hour's time, indeed, indeed, you must be condemned by God, and your own conscience. In such a view both must testify, that it is neither want of leisure, nor want of ability, that prevents your discharging your duty, but a stupid indifference about it, or rather a wretched aversion to it; the natural consequence of which might, if a little reflected upon, be sufficient to throw the most careless and arrogant sinner into an awful alarm if not a trembling consternation.

I apprehend, that the most plausible objections have now been canvassed; for I suppose, few will be so weak and cowardly, as to plead,

5. "That their domestics will not submit to the introduction of such orders as these."

But as this may be secretly thought of, where it would not be pleaded, especially where these duties have unhappily been omitted when families were first formed, and in their most flexible and pliant state, I will bestow a few words on this head.

And here I must desire, that you would not rashly con-

clude this to be the case, with respect to your own. Do not think so unkindly of your domestics, if they be not extremely wicked indeed, as to imagine they would be secretly discontented with spending a little time daily in hearing the word of God, and being present at your domestic devotion; much less should you allow yourself to think, till it appears in fact, that they will have the arrogance openly to dispute so reasonable a determination as this. Perhaps on the contrary, they are even now secretly wishing, that God would put it into your heart to make the attempt; and thinking with a kind of tender regret, "Why are we denied such a blessing, when the members of this and that family in the neighbourhood are favoured with it?"

But if it be indeed as you suppose, that they would think of it with a secret aversion, and come into it with apparent reluctance, if they can be induced to come into it at all; you would do well to reflect, whether this profaneness and perverseness may not, in a great measure at least, be owing to that very neglect which I am now pressing you to reform? Which if it be, it ought certainly to convince you in the most powerful and effectual manner, of the necessity of endeavouring to repair as soon as possible the mischief already done. And if there be really an opposition, you ought to let any in whom you discover it know, that your measures are fixed, and that you cannot and will not resign that just authority, which the laws of God and man give you in your own house, to the petulancy of their humour, or the impiety of their unhappy temper. Make the trial, whether they will dare to break with you, rather than submit to so easy a condition, as that of being present at your hours of family worship. If it be a servant that disputes it, you will no doubt think it a great blessing to your family to rid it of so detestable a member, in that relation. And if it be a child, grown up to years that should be years of discretion, that sets himself against this reformation, (and it is not possible that any others should oppose you,) though it is certain, that wherever such a son of Belial be, he must be a great grief to your heart, you will be delivered from a great deal of distress which the sight of his wickedness must daily give you, by refusing him a place in your own family, which he would only disgrace and corrupt, and leaving him to practise those irregularities and scandals which always go along with such a presumptuous contempt of religion, any where else rather than under your own roof.

I can think but of one objection more, and that is,

6. "That you may not know how to introduce a practice which you have so long neglected."

But this is an objection so very soon removed, that I hope, if nothing else lie in the way, your family will not continue another week in the unhappy circumstances in which your negligence has hitherto kept it. I were unworthy the name of a minister of the gospel, if, whatever my other engagements are, I were not willing to give you my utmost assistance, as soon as possible, in so good a work as the reformation of this great and lamentable evil. Far from thinking it a trouble to visit you, and spend an hour with you upon such an occasion; who would not esteem it a refreshment, and a blessing, to come and inform your domestics, when gathered together for this purpose, how wise and happy a resolution you had taken, to represent the reason they have to rejoice in it, and to bless God who had inspired you with it? And how sweet a work would it be to perform it, as for the first time, imploring the blessings of providence and grace on you and yours, and intreating those assistances of his holy Spirit, which may qualify you more abundantly for discharging your peculiar part in it, and may render it the successful means of planting, or of supporting and animating, a principle of true religion in every soul under your care? Nor would the joy and delight be confined, to the minutes spent with you at such a season: It would be carried home to the study, and to the house of God: And the very remembrance of it would for years to come, encourage to other attempts of usefulness, and strengthen our hands in the work of the Lord.

And oh my dear friend, whoever you are, be not ashamed, that a minister should on this occasion tell your children and servants, that you are sensible of your former neglect, and are determined in the strength of God to practise a duty, which it has indeed been criminal hitherto to omit. This is a mean and unworthy shame, and would prevent our reforming evils which are indeed shameful. It will be a glory to you, to be willing and solicitous to revive languishing religion; a glory, to give to other families an example, which, if they have the wisdom and courage to follow it, will undoubtedly bring down a rich variety of blessings on themselves, and, if followed by considerable numbers, on the public. At least, it will be an honour to you in the sight of men, and what is infinitely more, in the sight of God, to have made the generous effort; and not to make the guilty neglect of former years, an excuse for continuing to neglect, what it should rather be a powerful argument immediately to practise.

But I would by no means insist upon it that divine wor-

ship should be introduced into your family in the particular manner I have recommended. Use your own judgment, and pursue your own inclination; so that it be but effectually and immediately done. You may perhaps think it convenient to call them together, and read over this letter to them; telling them at the conclusion, that you are in your conscience convinced there is reason in it which cannot be answered, and that therefore you are resolved to act agreeably to it. You may then proceed to read a portion of scripture, and to pray with them in such a manner as you may think most expedient. But in whatever manner it be done, you will remember, that it must be with reverence and solemnity, and with unfeigned fervour of devotion, as in the sight of the heart-searching God. And you will farther remember, that when once introduced, it must be resolutely and constantly carried on; for to cast out this heavenly guest, will in some degree be more shameful, than not to admit it. But I hope, sweet experience of the pleasure of these duties will be instead of a thousand arguments, to engage your adherence to them. May God give you resolution immediately to make the attempt! and may he assist and accept you, and scatter down every desirable blessing of providence and of grace, on you and yours! So that this day, (for I hope it will be introduced this very day,) may become memorable in your lives, as a season from whence you may date a prosperity and a joy hitherto unknown, how happy soever you may have been in former years: For very imperfect, I am sure, must that domestic happiness be, in which domestic religion has no part.

How shall I congratulate myself, if in consequence of the representation and address I have now been making to you, I may be the blessed instrument in the divine hand of inspiring you with such a resolution! What an additional bond will then be added to our friendship, while God continues us together in life! Yea, what an everlasting bond of a nobler friendship, in a future state; where it will be, before the throne of God, my joy to have given such admonitions as these, and yours faithfully and obediently to have received them.

But if after all you will not be persuaded, but will hearken to the voice of cowardice, and sloth, and irreligion, in defiance of so many awakening and affecting reasons, you must answer it at large. If your children and servants grow up in the neglect of God, and pierce your heart with those sorrows, which such servants, and especially such children, are like to occasion; if they raise profane and profligate families; if they prove the curse of their country, as well as the torment and ruin of those most intimately related to them; the guilt is in part yours, and

(I repeat it again,) you must answer it to God at the great day, that you have omitted the proper and appointed method of preventing such fatal evils. In the mean time, you must answer the omission to your own conscience; which probably has not been easy in former days, and in future days may be yet more unquiet. Yes, Sir, the memory of this address may continue, to torment you, if it cannot reform you: And if you do not forsake the house of God, as well as exclude God and his worship from your own house, you will meet with new wounds; for new exhortations and admonitions will arm reflection with new reproaches. And in this uncomfortable manner you will probably go on, till what has been the grief and shame of your life, become the affliction of your dying bed; nor dare I presume to assure you, that God will answer your last cries for pardon. The best you can expect under the consciousness of this guilt is, to pass trembling to your final doom:——But whatever that doom be, you must acquit your minister who has given you this faithful warning*; and this letter, transcribed as it were in the records of the divine omniscience, shall testify, that a matter of so great importance hath not been wholly neglected, hath not been coldly and slightly urged, by,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate Friend, and faithful Servant, in our Common Lord,

P. DODDRIDGE.

Northampton, Dec. 20, 1749.

POSTSCRIPT.

TO prevent, as far as possible, any objection which might arise from not having any proper form just at hand, I shall here subjoin two, which I will recommend to those who may happen not to be better provided. The first is indeed, (so far as I know,) pretty peculiar, being intended for a family into which prayer is just going to be introduced, after having been long neglected: The other is for morning or evening, with such proper variations to suit either as common sense will direct. And I desire it may be observed, that it may well be used as a directory to those, who do not chuse to use it as a form. And I apprehend, it may be most serviceable in this view; as my desire to reduce it within narrow limits, and yet to suggest as many thoughts as possible, hath obliged me to such conciseness of expression, that the ideas are varied faster than many capacities may conveniently admit. But I pray God to enlarge your heart, that you may expatiate upon these hints to your own edification, and that of all those that join with you.

* If this letter should be presented by any of my brethren in the ministry to any of their hearers, they may easily see, that this expression is applicable to them, as well as to those who may receive it from my hands.

A Prayer, which may be used as an Introduction to a stated Course of Family Prayer, where it hath been formerly neglected.

OH most great and glorious God! When we consider thee, as the gracious author of all those mercies which we enjoy in our persons and in our family, we have great reason to humble ourselves before thee, that we have not more solemnly acknowledged that goodness, on which we have so long and so comfortably subsisted. Justly mightest thou, Oh thou almighty Jehovah, have poured out thy fury upon those, that herein have acted as if they knew thee not, even upon this family which hath not called on thy name. But confessing and lamenting this our sinful and inexcusable neglect, we earnestly intreat thee through Jesus Christ to pardon it, and to accept and strengthen the resolution, which in dependence on thy grace we would now form to be for the future diligent in it, and to do all we can in our respective stations to encourage and support it.

And we intreat thee to bless those religious opportunities, which as a family we may enjoy. Enable us to hear thy word with due attention: Open our minds to all the instructions we receive from it, and bow our hearts to humble obedience.

Be favourably present with us, when we are offering our addresses to thy throne! While we are adoring thine infinite perfections, may we feel a reverent and joyful sense of them upon our hearts! While we confess our sins before thee, may we inwardly abhor them and mourn over them, and be inspired with firm resolutions, that we will never return to them any more, but will guard against every appearance of evil! Excite in our souls earnest desires after those spiritual blessings, which we ask at thine hands! May we intercede for others with fervent charity! May we acknowledge thy mercies with the most lively gratitude, and devote ourselves to thee with full purpose of heart!

And on the whole, may every one of us find the divine life growing and advancing in our souls by every opportunity of this nature; that we may rejoice in each other, and in thee; and that true religion being firmly established in our own hearts, may by our means be communicated to others, so far as our influence over them may extend; till at length, having worshipped thee together in such institutions as these in an holy and acceptable manner, we may join that large and blessed family above, which is for ever rejoicing in thy presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee, Oh Father, and thine Holy Spirit, be everlasting praises. *Amen!*

A Prayer for a Family, to be used either Morning or Evening, with such Variations as may easily be understood by any who are able to read it.

Adoration.—Most great, eternal, and ever blessed God! We thine unworthy creatures desire at this time with all humility to bow ourselves down in thine awful and majestic presence, acknowledging thine infinite perfections and glories. —[We adore thee, as the first and the last, the greatest and the best of beings; who art originally and necessarily possessed of knowledge and power, wisdom and righteousness, holiness and truth, mercy and goodness, in degrees which no other being can conceive.]—We pay thee our homage, as the author and support of universal nature, the Lord and life of the creation. We acknowledge ourselves thy creatures, whose bodies and souls have been formed by thine hand, and continually maintained and defended by thy care and favour.

Confession.—Most justly mightest thou therefore, Oh our heavenly Father, have expected from us the most constant gratitude, duty, and obedience: But we humbly confess before thee, (and we desire to do it with the deepest humiliation and shame, remorse and sorrow,) that we have been very much wanting in those returns; yea, that we have all most grievously offended thee.—[We confess, Oh thou holy, holy, holy, Lord God, that we are polluted and guilty creatures, and so most unworthy and unfit to appear in thy presence.]—We acknowledge, Oh Lord, that we were shapen in iniquity, and in sin did our mothers conceive us; and that we have, from our very childhood, been renewing our provocations and transgressions in our thoughts, our words, and our actions; and all these attended with circumstances of high aggravation.—[We own and lament, Oh thou most gracious Sovereign, that we have in numberless instances, negligently, yea and presumptuously broken those wise and holy laws, which thou gavest us for our good; and that by the breach of them we have deserved thy righteous displeasure:] So that we might have been made examples of justice, and spectacles of misery, to all thy rational creation.—[We might long since have been cut off from this pleasant abode which thy goodness has assigned us, and from all the comforts thou hast given us in it, and been sent down to everlasting darkness, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.]

Petition for pardon and grace in Christ.—But we humbly implore thy pardon and mercy in Christ Jesus our Lord, thine

only begotten and well beloved Son; who hath by thine appointment, Oh compassionate Father, visited this world of ours, not only to give it the most excellent instructions, confirmed by the most astonishing miracles, and recommended by the most amiable example; but also to redeem us to God by his blood, and to offer up his own life a sacrifice for us.—[He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification: And as he is now ascended into heaven, there to make a prevailing intercession for all that come unto God through him,]—— we presume to approach thy sacred presence with all becoming regards to him, humbly pleading that atoning blood which he shed on the cross, and that all-perfect merit and righteousness of his, by which alone sinners may draw near unto thee with acceptance. And we intreat thee for his sake, and in regard to our relation to him, fully and freely to forgive us all our numberless transgressions, and to be graciously reconciled to us; yea, to take us, unworthy as we are, into the number of thy dear children. For his sake we also humbly intreat thee, to free us from the power of sin, as well as from its guilt. Shed down, Oh thou God of all grace, thine holy Spirit upon our hearts in a rich abundance, to inspire us with a hatred of every thing that is displeasing to thee, and to form us to a love of universal goodness, and a desire of making continual improvements in it!

[Fill us, Oh Lord, we humbly beseech thee, with a fervent love to thy blessed self? In all things may we be obedient to thine holy precepts, and submissive to thy wise and gracious disposal! May we be united to Christ by a sincere faith, which shall work by love, and shew itself in keeping his commandments, as well as trusting his atonement, intercession, and grace! May we be always led by the holy Spirit of God, and cherish his influence on our hearts as the spirit of holiness and of love! To our brethren of mankind may we be strictly just, and affectionately kind, doing to others as we could reasonably desire they should do to us, and rejoicing in every opportunity of advancing their temporal or spiritual happiness!]

While we continue here in this uncertain world, give us, if it be thy blessed will, food to eat, and raiment to put on, health of body, and cheerfulness of mind, and whatever other enjoyments thou seest necessary to make our journey through life comfortable! But let us not have our portion on earth! May our hearts be more and more indifferent to it, and our views continually raised above it!—[May we learn to govern with strict authority our appetites and passions, and to deny ourselves wherever the precepts of thy gospel require it! On the whole, may every part of our conduct, in every relation and

circumstance of life, adorn religion; and may the lustre of our good works engage many around us to glorify our Father in heaven!]—May we continually remember the shortness of time, and the importance of eternity; and behave in such a manner, that should we be summoned away ever so suddenly, death may not be a terrible, but a joyful surprise! Support us, Oh Lord, in our last extremities, and help us to honour thee by our dying behaviour! Receive our departing spirits to the embraces of thy mercy, and give us a triumphant part in the resurrection of the just!

Intercession.—We pray for the advancement of thy gospel in the world, and for the conversion of Jews and Gentiles to the faith as it is in Jesus. We pray, Oh Lord, for the progress and improvement of the reformation, abroad and at home. We affectionately recommend to thee our only rightful sovereign king George, and all the branches of his family; intreating thee to continue to us by their means, the invaluable blessing of the protestant succession. We intreat thee by thy grace to animate all, who are distinguished by power, riches, or other advantages, that they may improve all their talents for the public good: And we earnestly pray, that the ministers of thy gospel of every denomination, may with united affection, ardent zeal, and eminent success, be carrying on the work of the Lord!

May it please thee, Oh thou God of mercy, to spread among christians of every profession a spirit of forbearance, candour, and love; and to visit all that are in any kind of affliction, whether personal or relative, of mind, body, or estate! Graciously support them under their sorrows, and in thine own time send them deliverance!

We beseech thee to bless us as a family; whether we preside over it, or belong to it, as children, sojourners, or servants, may we all be found in a faithful discharge of our duty to thee, and to each other! May our united and retired devotions be so performed, as to have the happiest influence on our temper and our conduct!

Thanksgiving.—And now, Oh most gracious and merciful Father, we desire with all our hearts to bless and adore thine holy name, for all thy great and unmerited goodness to us, and to the whole human race. We praise thee for our creation and preservation, for health and ease, for food and raiment, for liberty and safety, for friends and success; and above all, for our redemption, for the inestimable privilege of approaching to thee through a mediator, and for the rich and full provision thou hast made in him for the forgiveness of our daily sins, for our receiving all the supplies of grace we stand in need of here, and our

enjoying everlasting happiness hereafter. And under a sense of thy mercies, we desire to devote ourselves to thee as the Lord our God, and renew our covenant with thee through our Lord Jesus Christ; humbly resolving by the assistance of thy spirit and grace, to serve thee with all good fidelity unto the end of our lives.

We particularly bless thee for the mercies of the day [or night] past, and would humbly commit ourselves to thy gracious protection and favour this night, [or day,] intreating thee to guard us from all evil, and to grant that at our next assembling together we may have reason to unite our praises for the continuance of thy goodness: And may we be perpetually advancing in our preparation for that heavenly world, where we hope to worship thee without any of those imperfections which now attend us; which we ask and hope, through the merits of thy Son Christ Jesus, in whom we have righteousness and strength, and in whose name and words we conclude our addresses, calling on thee as our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name: Thy kingdom come: Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven: Give us this day our daily bread: And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen!*

N. B. As this prayer may be deliberately read over in about ten minutes, or leaving out what is included in crotchets in half a quarter of an hour, I think I may take it for granted, that the affair is brought to a crisis: For if just after reading this letter, being thus disarmed of every excuse as to the want of necessary helps, you will not call your family together to attend to it for so small a space of time, or to put up some other petitions with them, I fear it is a sad sign, you will live and die in the neglect of this important duty, and I must leave you to answer it in the presence of God.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

F. BAINES, PRINTER, LEEDS.